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# WHAT I BELIEVE.

BY  
LEON TOLSTOI.



\*  
*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN*

BY  
CONSTANTINE POPOFF.

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(V chem moya vera).

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## PREFACE.

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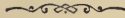
THE name of Count Leon Tolstoi stands high in the annals of his country's literature, as the author of 'War and Peace,' and of 'Anna Karenine.' His memory will be cherished and his works will be read by later generations, long after the author is no more. But none will remember him with such devoted affection as will the privileged few who have watched his life and labours during the last seven years. During this period he has withdrawn from the world and its vanities, and has devoted himself to the study of the teachings of Christ. Having become profoundly impressed with the Saviour's words concerning the duty of living a life of unselfish toil for the benefit of others, he has been endeavouring in a practical way to carry out his Master's commands, and has devoted himself to ministering to his fellows.

In these pages he sets forth the principles by which he is now ordering his life, and which he exhorts all men to adopt. The work has unfortunately been forbidden in Russia, but the manuscripts pass from hand to hand, doing their silent work of regeneration in the hearts of those who long for the coming of the kingdom of God on earth.

To English readers the construction of the work may appear somewhat strange, and occasional statements may even seem startling: but though they may not be expressed in the conventional language to which the nations of England and America are accustomed, the right principles are inculcated; and it is the translator's earnest hope that Count Tolstoi's words may find an echo in the hearts of all those who believe in the regeneration of humanity through the spirit and teachings of Christ.

C. POPOFF.

# WHAT I BELIEVE.



## INTRODUCTION.

I AM five-and-fifty years old, and, with the exception of the fourteen or fifteen years of my childhood, I have been until recently a 'Nihilist' in the proper signification of that term. I have not been a Socialist or a Revolutionist, but a Nihilist in the sense of being completely without faith.

Five years ago I began to believe in the doctrine of Christ, and in consequence a great change has been wrought in me. I now no longer care for the things which I had prized, and I have begun to desire things concerning which I had formerly been indifferent. Like a man who, going out on business, on his way suddenly becomes convinced of the futility of that business, and turns back; and all that stood to the right now stands to the left, and all that was to the left is now to the right; his wish to be as far from home as possible, is changed to the desire of being as near home as possible—so, I may say, the whole aim and purpose of my life has been changed; my desires are no more what they have been: for me,

good and evil have changed places. This experience came through my apprehending the doctrine of Christ in an altogether different way, and seeing it in a quite new light.

It is not my intention to interpret the doctrine of Christ, but simply to relate how I came to understand the simplest, clearest, and most intelligible point in that doctrine; and how, when once I had clearly grasped His meaning, it gave a new direction to all my thoughts.

I have no wish to interpret the doctrine of Christ, but I should like to prevent others from interpreting it wrongly. Christian churches generally acknowledge that all men, however they may differ from each other in knowledge or mental capacity, are equal before God; and that the truth revealed to man is accessible to all. Christ Himself has told us that the Father has hid some things 'from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.'

All men cannot be initiated into the mysteries of dogmatic, homiletic, patristic theologies, and so on; but all can understand what Christ taught and still teaches to simple and ignorant men. The teachings of Christ were incomprehensible to me until recently, but I understand them now, and what I have found I desire to explain to others.

The thief on the cross believed in Christ and was saved. Would it have harmed anybody if the thief had not died on the cross, but had come down to tell us *how* he believed in Christ?

Like the thief on the cross, I, too, believed in the doctrine of Christ, and found my salvation in it. This

is not a far-fetched comparison ; it worthily describes the condition of anguish and despair I was once in at the thought of life and of death, and it also indicates the peace and happiness which now fill my soul.

Like the thief, I knew that my life was full of wickedness ; I saw that the greater part of those around me were morally no better than I was. Like the thief, too, I knew that I was unhappy, and that I suffered ; and that all around me were unhappy and suffering likewise, and I saw no way out of this state of misery but through death.

Like the thief, I was nailed, as it were by some invisible power, to this life of suffering and evil ; and the same dreadful darkness of death which awaited the thief, after his useless suffering and enduring of the evils of life, awaited me.

In all this I was like the thief ; but there was this difference between us—he was dying, and I still lived. The thief could believe that his salvation would be realized beyond the grave, but I could not ; because, putting aside the life beyond the grave, I had yet to live on earth. I did not, however, understand life. It seemed awful to me until I heard the words of Christ and understood them ; and then life and death no longer seemed to be evils ; instead of despair I felt the joy of possessing a life which death has no power to destroy.

Can it harm anyone if I relate how it was that this change was effected in me ?

## I.

THE reason why I had not properly understood the doctrine of Christ, I have endeavoured to explain in my two works—(1) 'A Criticism on Dogmatical Theology,' and (2) 'A New Translation and Comparison of the Four Gospels,' with a commentary. In these works I examine all that conceals the truth from the eyes of men, and also retranslate and compare the four Gospels verse by verse.

I have been engaged for some six years upon this work. Every year, every month, I find new solutions and suggestions, and I am enabled to correct the defects which creep in through haste or impulse.

My life will perhaps end before the work is complete, but I am sure that it is a much-needed labour I have imposed on myself, and therefore I shall do what I can while my life lasts.

This is my outward work on the theology of the Gospel. But the inner working of my soul, that I wish to speak of here, was not the result of a methodical investigation of doctrinal theology, or of the actual texts of the Gospel; it was a sudden removal of all that hid the true meaning of the Christian

doctrine—a momentary flash of light, which made everything clear to me. It was something like that which might happen to a man who, after vainly attempting, by a false plan, to build up a statue out of a confused heap of small pieces of marble, suddenly guesses at the figure they are intended to form by the shape of the largest piece ; and then, on beginning to set up the statue, finds his guess confirmed by the harmonious joining in of the various pieces.

I wish to tell in this work how I found the key to the doctrine of Christ, by the help of which the truth was disclosed to me so clearly and convincingly.

I made the discovery thus : almost from the first years of my childhood, when I began to read the Gospel for myself, the doctrine which teaches love, humility, meekness, self-denial, and returning good for evil, was the doctrine that touched me most. I always considered it as the basis teaching of Christianity, and loved it as such ; but it was only after a long period of unbelief that its full meaning flashed upon me, that I understood 'life' as it is understood by our unlettered working-classes, and accepted the same creed which they profess, the creed of the Greek Church. But I soon observed that I should not find in the teaching of the Church the confirmation of my idea that love, humility, meekness, self-denial, were the essential principles of Christianity. I saw that this, which I regarded as the basis of Christianity, did not form the main point in the public teaching of the Church. At first I did not attach much importance to this. 'The Church,' said I to myself, 'acknowledges, besides the doctrine of love,



humility, and self-denial, a dogmatical and ritualistic doctrine. This estranges my heart ; it is even repulsive to me, but there is no harm in it.'

While, however, submitting to the teaching of the Church, I began to see more and more clearly that this peculiarity was not so unimportant as I had at first regarded it. I was drawn away from the Church by various singularities in its dogmas ; by its approval of persecution, capital punishment, war ; and also by its intolerance of all other forms of worship than its own ; but my faith in the teaching of the Church was shaken still more by its indifference to what seemed to me the very basis of the teaching of Christ, and by its evident partiality for what I could not consider an essential part of that doctrine. I felt that there was something wrong, but I could not make out distinctly what it was, because the Church did not *deny* what seemed to me the main point in the doctrine of Christ, though it failed to give it its proper position and influence.

I only passed from 'Nihilism' to the Church because I felt the impossibility of living without faith—without a knowledge of what is good and evil, resting on something more than my animal instincts. I hoped to find this 'something' in Christianity. But Christianity, as it appeared to me then, was only a certain disposition of mind—a very vague one. I turned to the Church for obligatory precepts of life, but the Church gave me only such as did not draw me nearer to the Christian state of mind I longed for, but rather alienated me from it. I turned away from the Church. For the precepts which were given me



by the Church concerning belief in dogmas, observance of the sacraments, fast-days, prayers, I did not care ; and precepts really founded on the teachings of Christ were wanting.

Moreover, the precepts of the Church weakened, and sometimes even destroyed, that Christian state of mind which alone seemed to me to be the true aim of life.

What perplexed me most of all was, that all the evil things that men do, such as condemning private individuals, whole nations, or other religions ; and the inevitable results of these condemnations—executions and wars—were justified by the Church. I saw that the doctrine of Christ, which teaches us humility, tolerance, forgiveness, self-denial, and love, was extolled by the Church, but that at the same time she sanctioned what was incompatible with such teachings.

Could the doctrine of Christ be thus weak and inconsistent? That I could not believe. Besides, it had always perplexed me to find that the texts upon which the Church has grounded her dogmas are of an obscure character, whereas those which teach us how *to live* are the most simple and clear. While the dogmas, and the duties derived from them, are specified by the Church in the most forcible manner, the practice of the 'doctrine' is urged only in obscure, dim, and mystical expressions. Is it possible that this was what Christ desired for His teaching? I could only find the solution of my doubts in the perusal of the Gospels, and I read them over and over again. Of all the Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount was the

portion which impressed me most, and I studied it oftener than any other part. Nowhere else does Christ speak with such solemnity; nowhere else does He give us so many clear and intelligible moral precepts, which commend themselves to everyone. If there are any clear and definite precepts of Christianity, they must have been expressed in this sermon; and, therefore, in those three chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel I sought the solution of my doubts.

Many and many a time I read over the sermon, and every time I felt the same emotion on reading the texts about 'turning one's cheek to the smiter,' 'giving up our cloak to him who takes our coat,' 'being at peace with all men,' and 'loving our enemies,'—and yet there remained in me the same feeling of dissatisfaction. The words of God were not as yet clear to me. They seemed to enjoin an impossible self-abnegation, which annulled life itself, and therefore it seemed to me that such abnegation could not be the requirement on which depended man's salvation.

But then, if that were not the express condition of salvation, there was nothing fixed and clear! I read not only the Sermon on the Mount, but the rest of the Gospels, and various commentaries upon them. Our theological explanations tell us that in the apophthegms of the Sermon on the Mount an indication is given of the perfection after which man must strive; that man being full of sin cannot attain this perfection by his own unaided strength, and that the salvation of a man lies in faith, prayer, and the gifts of the grace of God; but these explanations did not satisfy me.

Why should Christ have given us such clear and good precepts, applicable to us all, if He knew beforehand that the keeping of them was impossible by man in his own unaided strength?

On reading over these precepts, it always seemed to me that they applied to myself, and that I was morally bound to obey them. I even felt convinced that I *could*, immediately and from that very hour, do all that they enjoined.

I wished and tried to do so, but as soon as any difficulty arose in the way of my keeping them, I involuntarily remembered the teaching of the Church, that 'man is weak, and can do no good thing by himself;' and then I became weak.

I had been told that it was necessary to believe and to pray, but I felt that my faith was weak, and that I could not pray. I had been told that it was necessary to pray for faith—for that faith without which prayer is of no avail. I was told that faith comes through prayer, and that prayer comes through faith, which, to say the least, was certainly bewildering. Such statements commended themselves neither to reason nor experience.

After much useless study of the works that have been written in proof of the divinity or non-divinity of this doctrine, and after many doubts and much suffering, I was left alone with the mysterious Book, in which the doctrine of Christ is taught. I could not interpret it as others did, I could not abjure the Book, and yet I could not find a new and satisfying interpretation. It was only after losing all faith in the explanations of learned theology and criticism, and

after laying them all aside, in obedience to the words of Christ (Mark x. 15), that I began to understand what had till then seemed incomprehensible to me. It was not by deep thought, or by skilfully comparing or commenting on the texts of the Gospel, that I came to understand the doctrine. On the contrary, all grew clear to me for the very reason that I had ceased to rest in mere interpretations. The text that gave me the key to the truth was the thirty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. *But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. . . .*' The simple meaning of these words suddenly flashed full upon me; I accepted the fact that Christ *meant* exactly what He *said*; and then, though I had found nothing new, all that had hitherto obscured the truth cleared away, and the truth itself arose before me in all its solemn importance.

I had often read the passage, but these words had never till now arrested my attention—'I say to you, that ye *resist not evil*.'

In my conversations since with many Christian people, who know the Gospels well, I have observed the same indifference to the force of this text that I had felt. Nobody specially remembered the words; and, while conversing with persons upon the text, I have known them to take up the New Testament in order to assure themselves that the words were really there.

The words, 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right check, turn to him the other also,' had always presented themselves to me as requiring endurance

and self-mastery such as human nature is hardly capable of. They touched me. I felt that to act thus would be to attain moral perfection; but I felt, too, that I never should be able to obey them if they entailed nothing but suffering. I said to myself:

Well, I will turn my cheek—I will let myself be smitten again; I will give up my coat—they shall take my all. They shall even take away my life. Yet life is given to me: why should I thus lose it? This cannot be what Christ requires of us.' Then I said to myself, 'Perhaps in these words Christ only purposes to extol suffering and self-denial, and in so doing He speaks exaggeratingly, and His expressions are therefore to be regarded as illustrations rather than precise requirements.' But as soon as I comprehended the meaning of the following words, 'resist not evil,' it became clear to me that Christ does *not* exaggerate, that He does not require suffering for the mere sake of suffering, and that He only expresses clearly and definitely what He means. He says, 'Resist not evil;' but if you do, you may meet with some who, having smitten you on one cheek, and meeting with no resistance, will smite you on the other; after having taken away your coat, will take away your cloak also; having profited by your work, will oblige you to work on; will take, and will never give back. 'Nevertheless, I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.' Still do good, to those that even smite and abuse you.

Now, I understood that the whole force of the teaching lay in the words, 'resist not evil,' and that all the context was but an application of that great



precept. I saw that Christ does not require us to turn the other cheek, and to give away our cloak, in order to make us suffer; but He teaches us not to resist evil, and warns us that so doing may involve personal suffering. Does a father, on seeing his son set out on a long journey, tell him to pass sleepless nights, to eat little, to get wet through, or to freeze? Will he not rather say to him, 'Go, and if on the road you are cold or hungry, be not discouraged; go on.' Christ does not say, 'Let a man smite thy cheek, and suffer,' but He says, 'Resist not evil'—whatever men may do to you, 'resist not evil.' These words, 'resist not evil' (the wicked man), thus apprehended, were the clue which made all clear to me, and I was surprised that I could have hitherto treated them in such a different way. Christ meant to say, 'Whatever men may do to you, bear, suffer, submit; but never resist evil.' What could be clearer, more intelligible, and more indubitable than this? As soon as I understood the exact meaning of these simple words, all that had appeared confused to me in the doctrine of Christ grew intelligible; what had seemed contradictory now became consistent, and what I had deemed superfluous became indispensable. All united in one whole, one part fitting into and supporting the other, like the pieces of a broken statue put together again in their proper places.

This doctrine of 'non-resistance' is commended again and again in the Gospels. In the 'Sermon on the Mount,' Christ represents His followers—*i.e.*, those who follow this law of non-resistance—as liable to be persecuted, stoned, and reduced to beggary. Else-

where He tells us that the disciple who does not take up His cross, who is not willing to renounce all, cannot be His follower, and He thus describes the man who is ready to bear the consequences that may result from the practice of the doctrine of non-resistance. Christ says to His disciples : ' Be poor, be ready to bear persecution, suffering, and even death, without resisting evil.' He prepared for suffering and death Himself without resisting evil ; reprov'd Peter, who grieved over Him because He proposed thus to yield ; and He died, forbidding others to resist evil, remaining true to His own doctrine in His own example. All His first disciples obeyed the same law of the non-resistance of evil, and passed their lives in disability and persecution.

We may bring forward, as an objection, the difficulty of always obeying such a law ; we may even say, as unbelievers do, that it is a foolish doctrine, that Christ was a dreamer, an idealist, who gave precepts which it is impossible to follow. But, whatever our objections may be, we cannot deny that Christ expresses His meaning most clearly and distinctly ; and His meaning is, that man must not *resist evil* ; he who fully accepts His teaching cannot resist evil.

## II.

WHEN I at last clearly comprehended that the words ' resist not evil ' do really *mean* that we are never to resist evil, my former ideas concerning the teaching of Christ underwent a complete change ; I wondered,

not so much at my eyes being opened to the truth at last, as at the strange darkness which had, till then, enveloped my understanding. I knew—we all know—that the foundation requirement of the Christian doctrine is love to all men. Is not all Christianity summed up in the words, 'Love thine enemies'? I had known that from my earliest childhood: how was it, then, that I had not hitherto taken in these words in all their simplicity, but had rather sought for some allegorical meaning in them? 'Resist not evil' means never resist evil, *i.e.*, never offer violence to anyone. If a man revile you, revile not again; suffer, but do no violence. While believing, or at least endeavouring to believe, that He who gave us this commandment was God, how came I to say that I could not obey it in my own strength? If my master were to say to me, 'Go and cut wood,' and I were to answer that I could not do it in my own strength, would it not show that either I had no faith in my master's words, or that I did not choose to obey him? God has given us a commandment, which He requires us to obey; He says that only those who do keep His commandments shall enter life eternal; He fulfilled this commandment Himself, as offering us His example; and how could I then say that, though I never really tried to fulfil it, this injunction was one which it was impossible for a man to keep in his own strength, and without supernatural aid?

God became man for the securing of our salvation. Salvation lies in the fact that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, suffered for us, men; redeemed us from sin, and gave us the Church, through which



the grace of God is transmitted to all believers ; moreover, God the Son has left us this doctrine (teaching), and His own example, to show us the way of salvation. And yet I said that the rule of life given us by Christ was not only a hard one, but an impossible one, apart from supernatural aid. Christ does not consider it as such ; on the contrary, He says definitely that we are to fulfil His commandments, and that he who does not shall not enter the kingdom of God. He does not say that it is hard to keep this law ; He says, on the contrary, ' My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' St. John the Evangelist says, ' His commandments are not grievous.' How was it, I said, that the express and positive commandment of God, which He Himself speaks of as being easy, the commandment which He Himself obeyed as man, and which His first followers also fulfilled, was too hard for *me*, and even impossible for me, without supernatural aid ?

If a man were to set all the faculties of his mind to the annulling of a given law, what more forcible argument could he use for its suppression than that it was an impracticable law, and that the legislator's own opinion of it was, that it could not be kept without supernatural aid ? And yet this was exactly what I had thought about the commandment ' not to resist evil.' I tried to remember when and how the strange idea had first come into my mind, that the doctrine of Christ was divine in authority, but impossible in practice. On reviewing my past life, I discovered that this idea had never been transmitted to me in all its nakedness, for then it would have repelled me ; but

that I had imperceptibly imbibed it from my earliest childhood, and that the associations of my life had confirmed the strange error.

I was taught from my childhood that Christ is God, and that His teaching is divine and authoritative; while, on the other hand, I was also told to respect those institutions which, by means of violence, secured my safety from evil; I was taught to honour those institutions as being sacred. I was taught to resist evil; and it was instilled into me that it was humiliating and dishonourable to submit to evil, and to suffer from it; and that it was praiseworthy to resist evil. I was taught to condemn and to execute. I was taught to make war, *i.e.*, to resist evil by murder. The army, a member of which I was, was called a 'Christ-loving'\* army, and its mission was consecrated by the Church. I was taught to resist an offender by violence; to avenge a private insult, or one against my native land, by violence. All this was never regarded as wrong, but, on the contrary, I was told that it was perfectly right, and in nowise contrary to Christ's doctrine.

All surrounding interests, such as the peace and safety of myself and family, and of my property, were based on the law that was rejected by Christ—on the law of a 'tooth for a tooth.'

Ecclesiastical teachers told me that the doctrine of Christ was divine, but that its observance was impossible on account of the weakness of human nature; and that the grace of God alone could enable us to keep this law. Secular teachers told me, and the

\* Христолюбивое воинство.

whole order of life proved, that the teaching of Christ was impracticable and ideal, and that we must, in fact, live *contrary* to His doctrine. Such a notion of the practical impossibility of following the divine doctrine was imbibed by me gradually and almost imperceptibly. I was so accustomed to it, it coincided so well with all my animal feelings, that I had never observed the contradiction in which I lived. I did not see that it was impossible to admit the Godhead of Christ—the basis of whose teaching is non-resistance of evil—and, at the same time, to work consciously and calmly for the institutions of property, courts of law, kingdoms, the army, and so on. It could not be consistent for us to regulate our lives *contrary* to the doctrine of Christ, and then pray to the same Christ that we might be enabled to keep His commandments—to ‘forgive,’ and not to ‘resist evil.’ It did not then occur to me, as it does now, that it would be much more simple to regulate our lives according to the doctrine of Christ; and then, if courts of law, executions, war, were found to be indispensably necessary for our welfare, we might pray to have them too.

And I understood whence my error arose. It arose from my professing Christ in *words* and denying Him in *deed*.

The precept ‘not to resist evil’ is one which contains the whole substance of Christ’s doctrine, if we consider it not only as a saying, but as a law we are bound to obey. It is like a latch-key which will open any door, but only if it be well inserted into the lock. To consider this rule of life as a precept which cannot be obeyed without supernatural aid, is to annihilate

the whole doctrine of Christ completely. How can a doctrine, the fundamental law of which is cast aside as impracticable, be considered practicable in any of its details?

This is what was done with Christ's doctrine when we were taught that it was possible to be a Christian without fulfilling His law not to resist evil.

A few days ago I was reading the fifth chapter of St. Matthew to a Hebrew rabbin.

'That is in the Bible—that is in the Talmud too,' said he, at almost each saying, pointing out to me, in the Bible and in the Talmud, passages very like those in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' But when I came to the versè which says, 'resist not evil,' he did not say that is also in the Talmud; but only asked me with a smile, 'Do Christians keep this law? Do they turn the other cheek to be smitten?' I was silent. What answer could I give, when I knew that Christians, in our days, far from turning the other cheek when smitten, never let an opportunity escape of smiting a Hebrew on both cheeks. I was greatly interested to know if there were any law like this in the Talmud, and I inquired. He answered, 'No, there is nothing like it; but pray tell me, do Christians ever keep this law?' His question showed me clearly that the existence of a precept in the law of Christ, which is not only left unobserved, but of which the fulfilment is considered impossible, is superfluous and irrational.

Now that I comprehend the true meaning of the doctrine, I see clearly the strange state of contradiction within my own self which I had permitted to

arise. I was confessing Christ as God, and His teaching as divine, and at the same time I was ordering my life contrary to His teaching. What was left me to do, but to acknowledge the teaching as an impracticable one? In *word* I acknowledged the teaching of Christ as sacred; but I did not carry out that teaching in *deed*, for I admitted, and respected, the unchristian institutions which surrounded me.

Throughout the Old Testament we find it said, that the misfortunes of the Israelites arose from their believing in false gods, and not in the true God. In the eighth and twelfth chapters of the first Book of Samuel, the prophet accuses the people of having chosen, instead of God, who was their King, a human king, who, according to their opinion, was to save them. 'Do not believe in [toga] vain things,' says Samuel to the people, chap. xii. 21. 'They will not help you and will not save you, for they are [toga] vain. In order not to perish with your king, believe in God alone.'

My faith in these 'toga,' in these empty idols, hid the truth from my eyes. In my way to Him these 'toga,' which I had not the strength to renounce, stood before me, obscuring His light.

One day, as I was passing through Borovitzki gate,\* I saw a crippled old beggar, with his head bound up in a ragged cloth, sitting in a corner. I had just taken out my purse to bestow a trifle upon him, when a bold, ruddy-faced young grenadier in a government fur coat came running down the Kremlin slope. On seeing the soldier, the beggar sprang up with a look of terror, and ran limping down towards the Alexander

\* In Moscow.

Garden. The grenadier pursued him, but, not succeeding in overtaking him, stopped short and began to abuse the poor fellow for having dared to sit down near the entrance-gate in defiance of orders. I waited till the grenadier came up to where I stood, and then asked if he could read.

'Yes; what of that?' was the answer. 'Have you ever read the Gospel?' 'I have.' 'Do you know these words: "He that feedeth the hungry . . .?"' I repeated the text to him. He listened attentively. Two passers-by stopped. It was evidently disagreeable to the grenadier that, while conscientiously discharging his duty by driving people away from the entrance-gate, as he was ordered to do, he unexpectedly found himself in the wrong. He looked puzzled, and seemed to be searching for some excuse. Suddenly his dark eyes brightened up with a look of intelligence, and, moving away as if about to return to his post, 'Have you read the military code?' he asked. I told him that I had not. 'Well, then, do not talk of what you do not understand,' he said, with a triumphant shake of his head; and muffling himself up in his overcoat, he went back to his post.

He was the only man I have met in all my life who strictly, logically, solved the problem of our social institutions, which had stood before me, and still stands before each who calls himself a Christian.



## III.

To affirm that the Christian doctrine refers only to personal salvation, and has no bearing upon state affairs, is a great error. To say so, is but to assert an audacious, groundless, most evident untruth, which a moment's serious reflection suffices to destroy. Well, say I to myself, I will not resist evil; as a private man, I will let myself be smitten; but what am I to do if an enemy invade my native land, or other nations oppress it? I am called upon to take part in a struggle against evil—to go and kill. The question immediately arises: Which will be serving God, and which will be serving 'toga'? To go, or not to go? Suppose I am a peasant; I am chosen as the senior member of my village, as judge, as juryman. I am bound to take an oath, to judge, to punish. Fellow-creature, what am I to do? I have again to choose between the law of God and the law of man. Or let us say, I am a monk, and live in a monastery; the neighbouring peasants have taken possession of the hay we had mown for our own use. I am sent to take part in a struggle against evil—to prosecute these men. I have again to choose between the laws of God and the laws of man. None of us can evade the demand for such a decision. To say nothing of the class of society which I belong to—military men, judges, administrators, whose whole lives are passed in resisting evil—there is not a single private individual, be he ever so insignificant, who has not to choose between serving God by fulfilling His com-

mandments, or serving the 'toga' in the Government institutions of his country. Our private lives are interwoven with the organization of the State, and the latter requires unchristian duties of us, contrary to the commandments of Christ. At the present time, the military service, which is obligatory on all, and the participation of each, as jurymen, in the courts of law, place this dilemma with striking clearness before all. Each man is called upon to take up an instrument of murder—a gun, a sword—even if he do not kill a fellow-creature ; he loads the gun and sharpens the sword, *i.e.*, he is ready to commit murder. Each citizen is called upon to enter the courts of law, to take part in judging and punishing his fellow-creature ; *i.e.*, each must renounce the doctrine of Christ which teaches us not to resist evil.

The grenadier's question : The Gospel or the military code? The law of God or the law of man? still stands before all of us, as it did in the time of Samuel. It stood before Christ and His disciples. It now stands before all those who wish to be Christians ; it stood before me.

The doctrine of Christ which teaches love, humility, self-denial, had always attracted me. But I found a contrary law, both in the history of the past, and in the present organization of our lives—a law repugnant to my heart, my conscience, and my reason, but one which flattered my animal instincts. I knew that if I accepted the doctrine of Christ, I should be forsaken, miserable, persecuted, and sorrowing, as Christ tells us His followers will be. I knew that if I accepted the law of man, I should have the ap-



probation of my fellow-men ; I should be at peace, and in safety ; all possible sophisms would be at hand to quiet my conscience, and I should ' laugh and be merry,' as Christ says. I felt this, and therefore I avoided a closer examination of the law of Christ, and tried to comprehend it in a way that should not prevent my still leading my animal life. But finding that impossible, I desisted from all attempts at comprehension.

This led me into a state of mental obscurity, which now seems surprising to me. For instance, let me recall my former interpretation of the words : ' Judge not, and ye shall not be judged ' (Matt. vii. 1). ' Judge not, and ye shall not be judged ; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned ' (Luke vi. 37). The court of law, of which I was a member, and which guarded my property and my personal safety, seemed to me so unquestionably sacred, that it never came into my mind that the words ' condemn not ' could have any higher meaning than that we were not to speak evil of our fellow-men.\* The idea never occurred to me that these words could have any reference to courts of law, district courts, criminal courts, assizes, courts of peace, etc. When I at last took in the real meaning of the words ' resist not evil,' the question arose in my mind, What would Christ's opinion be of all these courts of law? And

\* The word *осуждать*, to condemn, has a two-fold meaning in the Russian language. It may have the sense (1) of judiciary condemnation, (2) of ' speaking evil ' of our neighbour. The second is the interpretation generally given to the word by the Orthodox Church.

seeing clearly that He would reject them, I asked myself: 'Do these words mean that we are not only never to speak ill of our brethren, but that we are not to condemn them to punishment by our human institutions of justice?'

In the Gospel of St. Luke, chapter vi., verses 37-39, these words come immediately after the commandment not to resist evil, and to return good for evil. After the words: 'Be merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful,' we read: 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.' 'Does it not mean that we are not only never to condemn our brother in word—*i.e.*, speak evil of him—but that we are not to institute courts of law for the condemnation of a fellow-creature to punishment?' said I to myself; and no sooner did this question arise, than both my heart and my reason answered in the affirmative.

I know how greatly this way of understanding the words surprises everyone at first. I was surprised too. To show how far I formerly was from the true interpretation of these words, I may here mention a foolish saying of mine, of which I am now heartily ashamed. Even after having become a believer, and having recognised the divinity of the Gospel, I used to say, in joke, on meeting with a friend who was an attorney or a judge: 'So you go on judging, and yet is it not said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged"?' I was so firmly convinced that these words have no other meaning than that we were not to speak ill of one another, that I did not see the blasphemy of my own words. So sure was I

that the words were not to be taken in a literal sense, that I used them—in joke—in their true application.

I shall give a circumstantial account of the way in which all my doubts as to the real sense of these words were dispersed, and how it became evident to me that Christ forbids all human institutions of justice, and that He could mean nothing else.

The first point that struck me, when I understood the commandment, 'Resist not evil,' in its true meaning, was that human courts were not only contrary to this commandment, but in direct opposition to the whole doctrine of Christ, and that therefore He must certainly have forbidden them.

Christ says: 'Resist not evil.' The sole object of courts of law is—to resist evil. Christ enjoins us to return good for evil. Courts of law return evil for evil. Christ says: 'Make no distinction between the just and the unjust.' Courts of law do nothing else. Christ says: 'Forgive all; forgive not once, not seven times, forgive without end.' 'Love your enemies.' 'Do good to them that hate you.' Courts of law do not forgive, but they punish; they do not good, but evil, to those whom they call the enemies of society. So that the true sense of the doctrine is that Christ forbids all courts of law. 'This cannot be the case,' said I to myself; 'Christ had nothing to do with human courts of law, and never considered them.' But I soon saw that this supposition was impossible. From the day of His birth, Christ had to submit to the jurisdiction of Herod, the Sanhedrim, and the high-priests. Indeed, we find that Christ speaks

more than once of tribunals as being an evil. He tells His disciples that they will have to be cited before the tribunals; and teaches them how they are to behave in courts of law. He says that He Himself will be condemned, and sets us all an example of the way in which we are to treat the laws of man. There can be no doubt that Christ meant the human courts of law, which were to condemn Him and His disciples; which have ever condemned, and still continue to condemn, millions of men. Christ must have seen this evil, for He distinctly points it out. In the case of the adulteress He positively rejects human justice, and proves that, on account of each man's own sinful nature, he has no right to judge another. We find the same doctrine repeated several times, as when He says, for instance, that the one who has a beam in his own eye cannot see the mote in his neighbour's eye; and that the blind cannot lead the blind.

'But, perhaps,' said I to myself, 'this applies only to the judgment of the adulteress, and the parable of the mote is only intended to show us the frailty of human nature in general. Christ does not intend to forbid our having recourse to human justice for our protection against evil men;' but I saw that this would not hold good either.

In the Sermon on the Mount, addressed to all men, He says: 'And if anybody sue thee at the law for thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.' Therefore He forbids our going to law.

But perhaps this applies only to the relations between private individuals and public courts of law;

yet Christ does not deny justice itself, and admits in Christian societies the existence of persons chosen for the purpose of administering justice. I see that this hypothesis is likewise inadmissible. In His prayer Christ enjoins all men, without any exception, to forgive, as they hope to be forgiven. We find the same precept repeated many times. Each man must forgive his brother when he prays, and before bringing his gift. Then how can a man judge and condemn another when, according to the faith he professes, he is bound to forgive? Thus I see that, according to the doctrine of Christ, a judge who condemns his fellow-creature to death is no Christian.

But perhaps the connection between the words 'judge not, condemn not,' and those that follow, proves that they do not refer to human courts of law? This is likewise false; on the contrary the connection between these words and those that follow, proves clearly that the words 'judge not' are directed precisely against the institutions of courts of law. According to the Gospel of Matthew and Luke, the texts: 'Judge not; condemn not,' are preceded by the words: 'Resist not evil, suffer evil, do good to all.' In the Gospel according to Matthew the words of the Hebrew criminal law are repeated: 'An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.' And after citing the criminal law, Christ says, 'But ye are not to act thus; resist not evil;' and then He goes on to say: 'Judge not.' So Christ's words refer precisely to our human criminal law, and by the words 'judge not' He clearly rejects it.

Besides this, we find in St. Luke that He not only



says, 'Judge not,' but adds, 'and condemn not.' The latter word, almost synonymous with the former, must have been added with some purpose, and it could have been with no other than that of showing clearly the sense in which the first word is to be taken.

Had He wished to say, 'Judge not thy neighbour,' *i.e.*, 'speak not evil of him,' He would have said so; but He says plainly, 'Do not condemn.' And then adds, 'and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.'

But perhaps Christ's words do not apply to courts of law at all, and I give them an interpretation of my own which is foreign to them.

I try to discover how the first followers of Christ, His disciples, considered human courts of law, and whether they approved of them.

Chapter iv., verses 11, 12, the disciple James says: 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?'

The word which is translated as 'Speak not evil,' is the word *καταλαλέω*. Even without consulting the dictionary, it is evident to all that this word can mean nothing but 'to accuse.' That is the only true meaning of the word, as anyone can find by consulting the dictionary. The translation of the passage in question is as follows: 'He that speaketh evil of

his brother, speaketh evil of the law,' and the question involuntarily arises, How so? In speaking evil of my brother, I do not speak evil of the law of man. No ; but if I *accuse* and sit in judgment over my brother, I evidently condemn the doctrine of Christ ; *i.e.*, I look upon the doctrine of Christ as insufficient, and thus judge and condemn the law of God. It clearly follows that I do not fulfil this law, but I become myself a judge. 'A judge,' Christ says, 'is he that can save.' Then how can I, being unable to save, be a judge, and punish ?

This whole text speaks of human judgment, and rejects it. The whole of this epistle is penetrated with the same idea. In the same epistle of James (chap. ii. 1-13) he says, (1) 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.' (2) 'For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment ; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or Sit here under my footstool, are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?' (5) 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him?' (6) 'But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seat?' (7) 'Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?' (8) 'If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Levit. xix. 18), ye do well.' (9) 'But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.' (10) 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (11) 'For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law' (Deut. xxii. 22 ; Levit. xxviii. 17-25). (12, 13) 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy: *mercy triumphs over the law.*' (The last words, 'mercy triumphs over the law,' have often been translated thus: 'Mercy is extolled in judgment,' and are cited as meaning that the existence of human judgment may be admitted, provided it be merciful.)

James exhorts his brethren to make no difference between men. If you make any difference, then you *διακρίνετε*, become partial, and are like judges with evil thoughts. You judge the beggar as being less worthy than the rich man. On the contrary, the rich man is the less worthy one. It is he who oppresses you and draws you before the judgment-seat. If you live according to the law of love and mercy (which James calls the royal law to distinguish it from the other), you do well. But if you have respect of persons, and make a distinction between rich and poor, you are transgressors of the law of mercy. James, bearing in mind the case of the adulteress who was brought before Christ to be stoned, or perhaps



speaking of adultery in general, says that he who punishes an adulteress with death is guilty of murder, and transgresses the eternal law, because the same eternal law that forbids adultery forbids murder. He says : ' And do like men who are judged by the law of liberty ; because there is no mercy for him who is himself without mercy, and therefore mercy destroys judgment.'

Can anything be more clear and definite ? Every distinction between men is forbidden ; every judgment by which we consider the one as good and the other as bad ; human justice is distinctly pointed out as being evil ; it is clearly shown that judgment sins by punishing for crime, and that all judgment is annihilated by the law of God—mercy.

I read the epistle of Paul the Apostle, who had himself suffered from courts of law ; and in his first chapter to the Romans the Apostle warns them against their vices and errors, and speaks against their courts of law (v. 32) : ' Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.'

Chapter ii., verses 1-11 : (1) ' Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.' (2) ' But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.' (3) ' And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?'

(4) ' Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?'

The Apostle Paul says, while fully aware of the just judgment of God, men act unjustly themselves, and they teach others to do the same ; therefore the man who judges another cannot be justified. Such is the opinion I find in the epistles of the Apostles in reference to courts of law. We all know that, during the whole course of their lives, human courts of law could never have been considered by them otherwise than as an evil—a trial which was to be endured with firmness and submission to the will of God.

On reviewing the position of the early Christians amidst the heathens, we clearly perceive that men who were themselves persecuted by human courts of law could never have dared openly to forbid them. They could only occasionally allude to them as an evil, the basis of which they could not admit.

I examine the writings of the earliest teachers of Christianity, and I find that they all consider the precept never to use force, never to condemn or execute, as the one which distinguishes their doctrine from all others (Athenagarus, Origen). They only submit to the tortures inflicted upon them by human justice. The martyrs all confessed the same, not only in word, but in deed.

I find that all true Christians, from the disciples up to the time of Constantine, regarded courts of law as evils which had to be endured with patience ; and the possibility of a Christian's taking any part in judging another never occurred to any one of them.

All this convinced me that the words 'judge not and condemn not' apply to courts of law; and yet these words are so generally understood as meaning only 'speak no evil of thy neighbour,' that courts of law flourish, so boldly and with such assurance, in all Christian states, and are so openly upheld by the Church. It was some time before I could feel quite convinced that my interpretation was the right one.

'If all have till now interpreted the words as referring to evil speaking, and have consequently instituted these courts of law, they must have some good grounds for acting thus,' said I to myself, 'and I must be in the wrong.'

And I turned to the commentaries of the Church. In all of them, from the fifth century to the present day, I found that these words are considered as signifying to condemn in word—*i.e.*, to speak evil of our neighbour. Now if these words be understood as meaning nothing else, does not the question immediately arise, How can we help judging others? We must condemn (blame) what is evil? Thus the point on which all comments turn is: What may we condemn, and what may we not condemn? We are told that these words cannot be considered as forbidding the servants of the Church to judge—that the Apostles themselves judged (Chrysostom and Theophilactus). We are told that these words of Christ probably applied to the Hebrews, who often used to accuse their neighbours of trifling sins, while committing greater ones themselves.

But nowhere is there a word said about our human institutions of courts of law, or of the reference which

this precept not to judge may have to them. Does Christ forbid them, or does He approve of them? This question, which arises so naturally in our minds, is left unanswered, as if there could not be the slightest doubt that, when once a Christian has taken his seat in the judgment-hall, he has a right, not only to judge his neighbour, but even to condemn him to death.

I consulted the Greek, Catholic, and Protestant theologians, as well as the works of the Tübingen school, and I found that even the most liberal interpreters considered these words as meaning 'not to speak evil of.' Not one of them solves the question why so narrow an interpretation is given, and why they are not considered as prohibiting the institution of courts of law; or why Christ, while forbidding our speaking evil of a fellow-creature—which each of us may often do inadvertently—does not consider as wrong, and does not forbid, the same condemnation when given consciously, and accompanied by violence against the condemned man. That the word 'condemn' may apply to judiciary condemnation, from which millions suffer, is not even hinted at. Nor is this all. By means of these very words, 'judge not and condemn not,' the form of judiciary condemnation is set altogether apart, and fenced round. Our theological interpretations say that the existence of courts of law in Christian states is necessary, and is not contrary to the law of Christ.

This made me doubt the sincerity of these interpretations, and I applied myself to a closer examination of the translation of the words 'judge' and

‘condemn,’ which is the thing I ought to have begun with.

In the original these words are *κρινω* and *καταδικαζω*. The incorrect rendering of the word *καταλαλεω*, in the Epistle of James, which is translated as ‘speak not evil,’ confirmed my doubts of the correctness of the translation.

I consult the translation of the words *κρινω* and *καταδικαζω* in the Gospels in various languages, and I find that the word ‘to condemn’ is translated in the Vulgate and in French by the word *condemner*; in Slavonic, *осуждать*; by Luther, *verdammen*—to damn, to doom.

The different renderings of these words increased my doubts, and I asked myself what the Greek word *κρινω*, used in both the above-mentioned Gospels, could really mean, and what was the true signification of the word *καταδικαζω*, which is used by Luke the Evangelist, who wrote, according to the opinion of all able scholars, in good Greek? If a man who knew nothing about the Gospel, and the interpretations given it, were to have this saying placed before him, how would he translate it?

I consulted the common dictionary, and I found that the word *κρινω* has many different meanings, and amongst others is very often used in the sense of ‘condemning by judgment,’ executing, but never in that of ‘evil-speaking.’ I consulted the glossary of the New Testament, and I found that this word is often used there in the sense of condemning by judgment. It is sometimes used as meaning ‘to choose,’ but never as ‘to speak evil of.’ And so I saw that



the word *κρινω* may be rendered in several ways, but that a translation which renders it as 'speaking evil of' is the furthest from the original.

I looked for the word *καταδικαζω*, added to the word *κρινω*, which has several meanings, evidently for the purpose of explaining the sense in which the first is taken by the writer himself. I looked in the common dictionary for the word *καταδικαζω*, and I found that this word never had any other meaning than to 'condemn by judgment' or to 'execute.' I consulted the glossary of the New Testament, and I found that this word is used in the New Testament four times, and every time in the sense of 'condemn,' 'execute.' I consulted the context, and I found that this word is used in the Epistle of James, chapter v., verse 6, in which it is said: 'Ye have condemned and killed the just.' The word 'condemned' is the same word, *καταδικαζω*, which is used in reference to Christ, who was condemned to death; and in no other way and in no other meaning is this word used, either in the whole New Testament or in any Greek dialect.

What can this mean? What a state of idiocy have I fallen into! All of us, when reflecting on the destiny of man, have been struck with terror at the sufferings and evils which our human criminal laws have brought into our lives—evils both for those who judge and for those who are judged, from the executions of Tshingis-Han in the second half of the 12th century and the revolutions to those of the present day.

No man of feeling has escaped the impression of horror, and doubt concerning 'good,' produced by the

recital, if not by the sight, of men executing their fellow-men by rods, the guillotine, or the gallows.

In the Gospels, every word of which we esteem sacred, it is said clearly and distinctly, 'You have the criminal law—a tooth for a tooth; and I give you a new one—resist not the evil man. Fulfil this commandment all of you; return not evil for evil; always do good to all; forgive all.'

And farther on we read, 'Judge not;' then, in order to render all doubt impossible as to the meaning of His words, Christ adds, 'condemn not to punishment by courts of law.' My heart says clearly, distinctly, 'Do not execute.' Science says, 'Do not execute; the more you execute, the more evil there will be.' Reason says, 'Do not execute; you cannot put a stop to evil by evil.' The Word of God, which I believe in, says the same. I used to read the whole doctrine. I read these words, 'Judge not, ye shall not be judged; condemn not, ye shall not be condemned; forgive, ye shall be forgiven.' I acknowledged that these were God's words, and I thought they meant that we are not to gossip or slander, and I continued to consider courts of law as Christian institutions, and myself as a judge and a Christian! I was shocked at the grossness of the error I was indulging.

#### IV.

NOW I understood what Christ meant when He said, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. And I say unto you,



resist not evil.' Christ means, 'You have been taught to consider it right and rational to protect yourselves against evil by violence, to pluck out an eye for an eye, to institute courts of law for the punishment of criminals, to have a police, an army, to defend you against the attacks of an enemy ; but I say to you, do no violence to any man, take no part in violence, never do evil to any man, not even to those whom you call your enemies.'

I now understood that, in this doctrine of non-resistance, Christ not only tells us what the natural result of following His doctrine will be, but by placing this same doctrine in opposition to the Mosaic law, the Roman law, and the various codes of the present time, He clearly shows that it ought to be the basis of our social existence, and should deliver us from the evil we have brought on ourselves. He says, 'You think to amend evil by your laws, but they only aggravate it. There is one way by which you can put a stop to evil ; it is by indiscriminately returning good for evil. You have tried the other law for thousands of years ; now try Mine, which is the very reverse.' Strange to say, I have had frequent opportunities lately of conversing with men of divers opinions on this doctrine of non-resistance. I have met with some who agreed with me, though these have been few. But there are two orders of men who always refuse to admit, even in principle, a direct understanding of this doctrine, and warmly uphold the justice of resisting evil. They are men belonging to two extreme poles : our Christian conservative patriots, who consider their Church as the true orthodox one ; and our revolutionary

atheists. Neither the former nor the latter will give up their right to resist by violence what they consider as evil. Even their cleverest, most learned men close their eyes to the simple, self-evident truth, that if we admit the right of one man to resist by violence what he considers as evil, we cannot refuse another the right to resist by violence what he in his turn may consider as evil. A short time ago I met with a correspondence particularly instructive as bearing on this very point. It was carried on between an orthodox Slavophil and a Christian revolutionist. The former excused the violence of war in the name of his oppressed Slavonian brethren, and the latter vindicated the violence of the revolution in the name of his oppressed brethren, the Russian peasants. Both admit the necessity for violence, and both ground their reasoning on the doctrine of Christ.

Each of us gives the doctrine of Christ an interpretation of his own, but it is never the direct and simple one which flows out of His words.

We have grounded the conduct of our lives on a principle which He rejects; we do not choose to understand His teaching in its simple and direct sense. Those who call themselves 'believers' believe that Christ-God, the second Person of the Trinity, made Himself man in order to set us an example how to live, and they strictly fulfil the most complicated duties, such as preparing for the sacraments, building churches, sending out missionaries, naming pastors for parochial administration, etc.; they forget only one trifling circumstance—to do as He tells them. Unbelievers, on the other hand, try to regulate their lives

somehow or other, but not in accordance with the law of Christ, feeling convinced beforehand that it is worthless. Nobody ever tries to fulfil His teaching. Nor is that all. Instead of making any effort to follow His commandments, both believers and unbelievers decide beforehand that to do so is impossible.

Christ says that the law of resistance by violence, which you have made the basis of your lives, is unnatural and wrong; and He gives us instead the law of non-resistance, which, He tells us, can alone deliver us from evil. He says, 'You think to eradicate evil by your human laws of violence; they only increase it. During thousands and thousands of years you have tried to annihilate evil by evil, and you have not annihilated it; you have but increased it. Follow the teaching I give you by word and deed, and you will prove its practical power.'

Not only does He speak thus, but He remains true to His own doctrine not to resist evil in His life and in His death.

Believers take all this in with their ears, hear it read in churches, calling it the Word of God. They call Him God, and then they say, 'His doctrine is sublime, but the organization of our lives renders its observance impossible; it would change the whole course of our lives, to which we are so used and with which we are so satisfied. Therefore, we believe in this doctrine only as an ideal which mankind must strive after—an ideal which is to be attained by prayer, by believing in the sacraments, in redemption, and in the resurrection of the dead.' Others, unbelievers, the

free interpreters of Christ's doctrine, the historians of religion—Strauss, Renan, and others—adopting the interpretation of the Church, that this doctrine has no direct application to life, and is only an ideal teaching which can but serve to console the weak-minded, say, very seriously, that the doctrine of Christ was all very well for the savage population of the deserts of Galilee, but that we, with our civilization, can only consider it as a lovely reverie 'du charmant Docteur,' as Renan calls Him. According to their opinion, Christ could not attain the height of understanding all the wisdom of our civilization and refinement. If He had stood on the same scale of civilization as these learned men, He would not have uttered those pretty trifles about the birds of the air, about letting one's cheek be smitten, and about taking no care for the morrow. Learned historians judge Christianity according to what they see in our Christian society. Now the Christian society of our times considers our life as a good and holy one, with its institutions of solitary imprisonment, of alcazars, manufactories, journals, brothels, and parliaments, while it only borrows from the doctrine of Christ what is not against these habits of life. And as Christ's teaching is in direct opposition to all this, nothing is taken from that teaching but its mere words. The learned historians see this, and not having the same interest in concealing the fact as the so-called believers have, they subject this, for them, meaningless doctrine of Christ to a profound analysis, argue against it, and prove on good grounds that Christianity never was anything but the dream of an idealist. And yet it seems to me that before

pronouncing an opinion upon the doctrine of Christ, we ought clearly to understand what it is, and in order to decide whether His teaching be rational or not, it is necessary first of all to believe that He meant exactly what He said. This is just what neither the interpreters of the Church nor freethinkers do, and the reason why is not far to seek.

We know very well that the teaching of Christ, as we have received it, embraces all the errors into which humanity has fallen, all the 'toga,' empty idols, the existence of which we try to justify by calling them church, government, culture, science, arts, civilization, thinking thus to exclude them from the rank of errors. But Christ warns us against them all, without excluding any 'toga.'

Not only Christ's words, but those of all Hebrew prophets, of John the Baptist, of all the truly wise men that have ever lived, have referred to this same church, this same government, culture, civilization, etc., calling them evils and the causes of man's perdition.

For instance, suppose an architect were to say to the owner of a house, 'Your house is in a bad state; it must be wholly rebuilt,' and were then to go on giving all the necessary details about the kinds of beams that would be required, how they were to be cut, and where placed. If the owner were to turn a deaf ear to the architect's words about the ruinous condition of the house and the necessity for its being rebuilt, and were only to listen with a feigned interest to the secondary details concerning the proposed repairs, the architect's counsels would evidently appear



but so much useless talk ; and if the owner happened to feel no great respect for the builder, he would call his advice foolish. This is exactly what occurs with the teaching of Christ.

I used this simile for want of a better one, and I remember that Christ, while preaching His doctrine, used one very like it. He says, 'I will destroy your temple, and within three days I will build up another.' He was crucified for these words. His doctrine is crucified for the same up to the present time.

The least that can be required of those who judge another man's teaching is, that they should take the teacher's words in the exact sense in which he uses them. Christ does not consider His teaching as some high ideal of what mankind should be, but cannot attain to, nor does He consider it as a chimerical, poetical fancy, fit only to captivate the simple-minded inhabitants of Galilee ; He considers His teaching as work—a work which is to save mankind. His suffering on the cross was no dream ; He groaned in agony and died for His teaching. And how many people have died, and will still die, in the same cause ? Such teaching cannot be called a dream.

Every doctrine of truth is a dream for those who are in error. We have come to such a state of error, that there are many among us who say, as I did myself formerly, that this doctrine of Christ is chimerical because it is incompatible with the nature of man. It is incompatible with the nature of man, they say, to turn the other cheek when he has been smitten ; it is incompatible with the nature of man to give up his property to another—to work, not for him-

self, but for others. It is natural to man, they say, to protect himself, his own safety, that of his family, and his property—in other words, it is the nature of man to struggle for life. Learned lawyers prove scientifically that the most sacred duty of a man is to protect his rights—*i.e.*, to struggle.

We need only for one moment cast aside the idea that the present organization of our lives, as established by man, is the best and most sacred, and then the argument that the teaching of Christ is incompatible with human nature immediately turns against the arguer. Who will deny that it is repugnant and harrowing to a man's feelings to torture or kill, not only a man, but even a dog, a hen, or a calf? I have known men, living by agricultural labour, who have ceased entirely to eat meat only because they had to kill their own cattle. And yet our lives are so organized, that for one individual to obtain any advantage in life another must suffer, which is against human nature. The whole organization of our lives, the complicated mechanism of our institutions, whose sole object is violence, are but proofs of the degree to which violence is repugnant to human nature. No judge will ever undertake to strangle with his own hands the man whom he has condemned to death. No magistrate will himself drag a peasant from his weeping family in order to shut him up in prison. Not a single general, not a single soldier, would kill hundreds of Turks or Germans, and devastate their villages—nay, not one of them would consent to wound a single man, were it not in war, and in obedience to discipline and the oath of allegiance.



That cruelty is only exercised (thanks to our complicated social machinery) which can be so divided amongst a number that none shall bear the sole responsibility, or recognise how unnatural all cruelty is. Some make laws, others apply them; others, again, drill their fellow-creatures into habits of discipline—*i.e.*, of senseless passive obedience; and these same disciplined men, in their turn, do violence to others—kill without knowing why or wherefore. But let a man even for a moment shake off in thought the net of worldly institutions which so ensnares him, and he will see what is really incompatible with his nature.

If once we cease to affirm that the evil we are so used to, and profit by, is an immutable divine truth, we may see clearly which is the more natural to man—violence, or the law of Christ. Which is better—to know that the comfort and safety of myself and family, all my joys and pleasures, are obtained at the price of the misery, depravity, and suffering of millions, by yearly executions, by hundreds of thousands of suffering prisoners, and by millions of soldiers, policemen and sergeants (*урядниковъ*) torn from their homes and half stupefied by military discipline, who protect my idle pleasures by keeping starving men at a distance with their loaded pistols;\* to know that every dainty morsel I put into my mouth, or give my children, is obtained at the price of all the suffering, which is inevitable, in order to obtain these dainties; or to know that my fare is my own, for nobody suffers for the want of it, and nobody has suffered in procuring it for me?

\* All policemen and sergeants are armed with pistols in Russia.

It is sufficient to comprehend, once for all, that, in our present organization of life, every joy, every moment of peace, is bought at the cost of the privations and sufferings of thousands, who are only restrained by violence, in order to see clearly what is natural to man; *i.e.*, not only to the animal nature of man, but to his rational nature as well. It is sufficient to understand the doctrine of Christ in all its high import and with all the consequences it entails, to see that it is not inconsistent with human nature, but that, on the contrary, His whole doctrine throws aside what *is* inconsistent with human nature—the delusive human teaching of resistance of evil, which is the chief cause of all human misery.

The doctrine of Christ, which teaches us not to resist evil is—a dream! But the sight of men in whose breasts love and pity are innate, spending their lives in burning their brethren at the stake, scourging them, breaking them on the wheel, lashing, slitting their nostrils, putting them to the rack, keeping them fettered, sending them to the galleys or the gallows, shooting them, condemning to solitary confinement, imprisoning women and children, organizing the slaughter of tens of thousands by war, bringing about periodical revolutions and rebellions; the sight of others passively fulfilling these atrocities, the sight of others again writhing under these tortures or avenging them—this is no dream!

When once we clearly understand the teaching of Christ, we see that it is not the world given by God to man for his happiness which is a dream, but the world such as men have made it for their own de-

struction which is a wild terrific dream—the delirium of a madman—a dream from which it is enough to awake once, never to return to it.

God came down from heaven—the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became man, to redeem us from the punishment entailed by the sin of Adam. We think that this God must speak in some mysterious, mystical way, difficult to be understood ; indeed, that His Word can only be understood through faith and God's grace ; and yet God's words are so simple, so clear. He says : 'Do no evil to each other, and there will be no evil.' Is it possible, that the revelation of God is so simple? Can this be all? All this is so familiar to us.

The prophet Elias having fled from the haunts of men, and concealed himself in a rock, had it revealed to him that he should see God at the entrance of the cavern. A tempest arose—the trees were rent asunder. Elias thought God was there and looked, but God was not there. The earth quaked, fire issued out of it, the rock was split in twain, the mountains fell. Elias looked, but God was not there. Then all grew still and calm, a light breeze wafted the fragrance of the freshened fields towards him. Elias looked, and lo! God was there. It is thus with the simple words of God : 'Resist not evil.'

They are very simple, but they contain in themselves the sole and eternal law of God and man. This law is eternal, and if in history we find any progress made towards the annihilation of evil, it is due to those who truly understood the doctrine of Christ, who suffered evil without resisting by violence. The pro-

gression of mankind towards good is brought about by *martyrdom*, not by *tyranny*. Fire cannot extinguish fire; no more can evil extirpate evil. Good, meeting with evil and remaining untainted by it, can alone conquer evil. There is a law in the heart of each man immutable as the law of Galileo—still more immutable. Men may turn aside from it, conceal it from others, nevertheless it is the only path that leads to true happiness. Each step which has brought us nearer to this great end was taken in the name of the doctrine of Christ: 'Resist not evil.' It is with greater confidence even than Galileo, that the follower of Christ can say, in defiance of all the temptations around him and the threats held out to him: 'It is not by violence but by doing good that you will eradicate evil.' And if the progress made be slow, it is only because the clearness, simplicity and rationality of the teaching of Christ and its inevitable absolute necessity are concealed from the eyes of men in the most crafty and dangerous manner; concealed under a spurious teaching, falsely called His.

## V.

EVERYTHING tended to convince me that I had now found the true interpretation of Christ's doctrine. But it was a long while before I could get used to the strange thought that after so many men had professed the doctrine of Christ during 1,800 years, and had devoted their lives to the study of His teachings, it was given me to discover His doctrine as something altogether new. It seems strange, nevertheless so it

was, Christ's doctrine of 'non-resistance' seemed to rise before me as something hitherto unknown and unfamiliar to me. And I asked myself how this could be. Had some false conception of Christ's doctrine prevented my understanding it?

When I first began to read the Gospel I was not in the position of one who heard the teaching of Christ for the first time. I had already a complete theory concerning the sense in which it was to be taken. Christ did not appear to me as a prophet, come to reveal the law of God to man, but rather as an expounder and amplifier of the indubitable divine law well known to me. I already possessed a complete, definite, and very complicated doctrine concerning God, the creation of the world and of man, as well as concerning the commandments of God, as transmitted to us through Moses.

In the Gospel I found the words: 'Ye have been told, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil.' The precept 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' was the commandment given by God to Moses. The precept, 'I say unto you, That ye resist not evil,' was a new commandment which reversed the first.

Had I considered the doctrine of Christ simply, without the theological theory I had imbibed from my earliest childhood, I should have understood the true sense of these simple words. I should have seen that Christ sets aside the old law and gives a new one. But it had been instilled into me that Christ did not reject the law of Moses—that, on the contrary, he confirmed it to the least jot and tittle, and amplified it.



The seventeenth and eighteenth verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, which seem to confirm that assertion, had, in my former studies of the Gospel struck me by their obscurity, and had raised doubts in my mind.

On reading the Old Testament, especially the last books of Moses, in which so many trivial, useless and even cruel laws are laid down, each preceded by the words, 'And God said to Moses,' it seemed passing strange to me that Christ should have confirmed such laws; His doing so seemed incomprehensible. But I then left the problem unsolved. I blindly believed the teaching of my childhood, that these commandments were inspired by the Holy Ghost; that they were in perfect harmony with each other; that Christ confirmed the law of Moses; and that He amplified and completed it. I could, indeed, never clearly explain to myself wherein the amplification lay, nor how the striking opposition, so obvious to all, between the verses 17-20 and the words 'but I say unto you' could be harmonized. But when I at last really understood the clear and simple meaning of Christ's doctrine, I saw that these two commandments were in direct opposition to each other; that there could be no question of harmony between them, or of the one being an amplification of the other; that it was necessary to accept either the one or the other, and that the interpretation of the verses 17-20 of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, which, as I have already said, had struck me by their want of clearness, was erroneous.

On a second reading of the same verses 17-20,

which had seemed so unintelligible to me, their meaning flashed full upon me.

This again was not the result of my having discovered anything new, or having made any alteration of the words; it was due solely to my having cast aside the false interpretation which had been given them.

Christ says (Matthew v. 17-19): 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or (the teaching of) the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle (the least particle) shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'

And (verse 20) he adds: 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Christ means by these words: 'I am not come to destroy the eternal law, for the fulfilment of which your books and prophecies are written; but I am come to teach you how to fulfil that eternal law. I do not speak of the law which your teachers, the Pharisees, call the law of God, but of the eternal law, which is less liable to change than heaven and earth.'

I here give the meaning of the text in other words, solely for the purpose of drawing the mind away from the incorrect interpretation usually offered. If this incorrect interpretation did not exist, we should see that the idea of Christ could not be better or more definitely expressed than by these words.

The interpretation that Christ does not reject the Mosaic law is based on the fact that in this passage,



without any ostensible reason (except the comparison of the jot of the written law), and contrary to the true sense, the word 'law' is treated as meaning the 'written law,' and not the eternal law. But Christ does not here speak of the written law. If Christ, in this passage, had spoken of the written law, He would have used the word 'the law and the prophets,' as He always does in speaking of the written law; but He uses a very different expression: 'the law *or* the prophets.' Had Christ meant to speak of the written law, He would have used the words 'the law *and* the prophets' in the next verse, which is but the continuation of the preceding one; but there He uses the word 'law' alone.

Moreover we find, in the Gospel according to St. Luke, that Christ uses the same words in a manner that leaves no doubt as to their true meaning (Luke xvi. 15). Christ says to the Pharisees, who thought to justify themselves by the written law: 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. 16th v.: The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.' And immediately after this, in the 17th verse, we read: 'And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.' The words 'the law *and* the prophets, until John,' annul the written law. The words 'it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail,' confirm the eternal law. In the first text Christ says 'the law *and* the prophets,' *i.e.* the written law; in the

second He uses the word 'law' alone, *i.e.* the eternal law. It is obvious, therefore, that the eternal law is here set in opposition to the written law, and that exactly the same occurs in the context of the Gospel of St. Matthew, where the eternal law is expressed by the words 'the law or the prophets.'\*

The history of the different renderings of this text (v. 17, 18) is very curious. In most of the transcripts the word 'law' is not followed by the words 'and the prophets.' In this case there can be no doubt of its signifying 'the eternal law.' In other transcripts, as, for instance, in those of Tischendorf and the canonical transcripts, the word 'prophets' is added, not with the conjunction *and*, but with the disjunctive *or*: 'the law or the prophets,' which likewise excludes the meaning of 'the written law,' and confirms that of the 'eternal law.'

In some transcripts again, which are not adopted by the Church, we find the word 'prophets' preceded by the conjunction *and*, and not by *or*; in these transcripts, after the repetition of the word 'law,' the words 'and the prophets' are again added. Thus the meaning given to the whole saying, by this remodelling, is, that Christ's words refer only to the written law.

\* As if to dispel all doubt as to the law He means, He, immediately after, most decisively casts aside the Mosaic law for the Divine law, of which not one jot nor tittle can fail, by the most direct contradiction which we meet with in the Gospels, of the law of Moses. He says, Luke xvi. 18: 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery;' *i.e.*, the written law permits divorce, but according to the eternal law it is a sin.

These variations give us the history of the various interpretations to which this passage has been subjected. One point is obvious: Christ speaks here, as He does in the Gospel according to St. Luke, of the eternal law; but we find men, amongst the transcribers of the Gospels, who have subjoined the words 'and the prophets' to the word 'law,' with the design of rendering the Mosaic law obligatory, and have thus altered the sense of the text.

Other Christians, again, who reject the Mosaic law, either leave out the word completely, or substitute the word  $\eta$  (*or*), for the word  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  (*and*). And thus the passage enters the canon with the disjunctive *or*. Yet though the text adopted by the canon is so indubitably clear, our canonical commentators continue to expound the passage in the spirit of the alterations which have not been adopted.

This passage has been treated by countless commentators, and as the less the expounder agrees with the simple, direct sense of the doctrine of Christ, the further his commentary must necessarily be from the true sense of that doctrine, the majority of expounders retain the apocryphal sense, which the text rejects.

In order to be convinced that Christ speaks in this verse only of the eternal law, it will suffice fully to understand the word which has given rise to these false interpretations. In Russian, it is 'законъ' (law); in Greek, νόμος; in Hebrew, 'torah.' This word has two principal meanings in the Russian, Greek, and Hebrew languages: the one, the unexpressed, unwritten law; the other, the written expression of

what certain men call the law. Indeed, the difference exists in all languages.

In Greek, in the Epistles of Paul, the difference is sometimes marked by the use of the article. In speaking of the written law, the Apostle omits the article before the word law; and when he speaks of the eternal law, the article is prefixed.

The ancient Hebrews, the prophets and Isaiah, always use the word 'tora' (the law) to indicate the eternal, unwritten, but revealed, law of God. This same word 'tora' (the law) was first used by Ezra, and later we find it in the Talmud, as signifying the five books of Moses, which bear the general title 'tora' in the same sense as our word 'Bible'; with this difference, however, that we distinguish the Bible from the law of God by two different denominations, while in the Hebrew language there is but one word for both.

Therefore Christ, using the word 'tora,' takes it in the two different acceptations of the word—either confirming it, as Isaiah and the other prophets do, in the sense of the law of God, which is eternal, or rejecting it, when He refers to the Mosaic law. But in order to make a distinction between the different meanings of the word, He always adds 'and the prophets,' and the pronoun 'your,' in speaking of the written law.

When Christ says: 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise; this is the whole law and the prophets,' He refers to the written law. He tells us that the whole written law may be reduced to this sole expression of the eternal law; and, by these His words, He annuls the written law.

When He says (Luke xvi. 16), 'The law and the prophets until John the Baptist,' He refers to the written law, and by these words asserts that it is no longer obligatory.

When He says (John vii. 19), 'Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?' or (John viii. 17), 'Is it not said in your law?' or again (John xv. 25), 'The word that is written in their law,' He refers to the written law—the law which He rejects—the law by which He was, soon after, sentenced to death. John xix. 7: 'The Jews answered Him: We have a law, and by our law He ought to die.' It is obvious that this law of the Hebrews, by which Christ Himself was sentenced to death, was not the law which He taught. But when Christ says, 'I come, not to destroy the law, but to teach you to fulfil it, for nothing can be altered in the law, but all must be fulfilled,' He does not speak of the written law, but of the Divine, eternal law.

It may be said that these proofs are controvertible; that I have skilfully assorted the contexts, and have carefully concealed all that could contradict my interpretation; that the commentaries given by the Church are very clear and convincing, and that Christ did not destroy the law of Moses, but He left it in full force. Let us suppose this to be the case. What, then, does Christ teach?

According to the commentaries of the Church, He taught men that He was the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God the Father; that He had come down from heaven to redeem mankind from the sin of Adam. But whoever has read the Gospel



knows that Christ says nothing of this, or, at least, alludes to it in very ambiguous terms ; the passages in which Christ speaks of Himself as being the Second Person of the Trinity, and of His redeeming mankind, are the shortest and the least perspicuous in the Gospels. In what, then, does the *rest* of Christ's teaching consist ?

It is impossible to deny, what all Christians have always acknowledged, that the main point in Christ's doctrine consists in His rules of life—how men are to live together.

Now, if we admit that Christ taught a new system of life, we must form some definite idea of the men among whom He taught.

Take, for instance, the Russians, the English, the Chinese, the Hindoos, or even any wild insular tribe, and you will be sure to find that they all have their own rules of life, their own laws ; and that no teacher could introduce new laws of life without destroying the former ones ; he could not teach without infringing them. Such would be the case everywhere. The teacher would inevitably have to begin by destroying our laws, which have grown precious and almost sacred in our eyes.

Perhaps in our days it might happen that the teacher of a new doctrine of life would but destroy our civil laws, our government, our customs, without interfering with the laws which we call Divine, though this is hardly probable. But the Hebrews had only one law—a Divine law which embraced life in its minutest details. What could a preacher teach them if he began by declaring that

the entire law of the people to whom he preached was inviolable ?

But let us assume this is not regarded as a proof. Then let those who assert that Christ's words confirm the Mosaic law, explain to themselves who they were whom Christ denounced during His whole life ; who did He speak against, calling them Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes ?

Who was it that refused to follow the doctrine of Christ, and crucified Him.

If Christ acknowledged the Mosaic law, where were the true followers of that law, whom Christ must have approved of ? Is there a single one ? We are told that the Pharisees were a sect. The Hebrews do not say so. They call the Pharisees the true fulfillers of the law. But let us suppose they were a sect. The Sadducees were also a sect. Where, then, were the true believers — those who did not belong to any sect ?

In the Gospel according to St. John, all the enemies of Christ are called Hebrews. They do not assent to Christ's doctrine ; they oppose it only because they are Hebrews. But in the Gospel the Pharisees and Sadducees are not the only enemies of Christ ; the lawgivers, who keep the Mosaic law, the scribes, who study it, and the elders, who are considered as the representatives of the popular wisdom, are likewise called the enemies of Christ.

Christ says, 'I did not come to call the righteous to repentance,' to a change of life, *μετάνοια*, 'but sinners.' Where were the righteous, and who were they ? Surely Nicodemus was not the only one ? And



even Nicodemus is described as being a good man, but one who had gone astray.

We have grown so used to the singular interpretation given us, that the Pharisees and some wicked Hebrews crucified Christ, that the simple question never occurs to us, Where were the *true* Hebrews, who kept the law and who were neither Pharisees nor wicked men? No sooner does the question arise than all grows clear. Christ, be He God or man, brought His doctrine to a people who had already a law which gave them definite rules of life, and which they called the law of God. In what light could Christ have considered that law?

Every prophet—teacher of a faith—on revealing the law of God to a people, will find that they already possess a law which they consider as the Divine law, and he cannot avoid a twofold application of the word, as referring either to what men wrongly consider the law of God (*your law*) or as referring to the true eternal law of God. Moreover, not only is the preacher of the new doctrine unable to avoid the twofold use of the word, but it often happens that he does not even endeavour to do so, and purposely unites both ideas, in order to point out that the law confessed by those he tries to convert, though defective as a whole, is not devoid of some Divine truths. And it is just these truths, so familiar to his hearers, that every preacher will take as the basis of his preaching. Christ does so in addressing the Hebrews, who have the same word 'tora' for both laws. Referring to the Mosaic law, and oftener still to the prophets, especially the prophet Isaiah, whom he often quotes,

Christ acknowledges that in the Hebrew law, and in the prophets, there are eternal truths, Divine truths which coincide with the eternal law; and He bases His doctrine upon them, as for instance in the saying, 'Love God and thy neighbour.'

Christ expresses this idea on many occasions, *e.g.*, Luke x. 26: 'He said unto him, What is written in the law? *how readest thou?*' We may find the eternal truth in the law, if we can read. And He points out more than once that the precept contained in their law of love to God and their neighbour was a precept of the eternal law.

After the parables by which he explains his doctrine to His disciples, Christ says, as if in reference to all that had preceded: 'Therefore every scribe (*i.e.* every man that can read, and has been taught the truth) is like an householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure (indiscriminately) things old and new.' (Matthew xiii. 52.)

It is thus that St. Irenæus understands these words, and so does the Church, and yet, arbitrarily transgressing the true sense of the saying, they attribute to these words the meaning that the whole ancient law is sacred. The obvious meaning of the text is, that he who seeks for what is good, takes not only what is new, but what is old too, and that its being old is not a sufficient reason for throwing it aside. Christ means, by this saying, that He does not deny what is eternal in the ancient law. But when questioned concerning the law or its forms, He says: 'We do not pour new wine into old bottles.' Christ could not confirm the whole law, neither could He

completely deny the law and the prophets ; He could neither deny the law which says, ' Love thy neighbour as thyself,' nor the prophets, in whose words He often clothes His thought.

And so, instead of our understanding these clear and simple words as they were said, and in the sense which the whole doctrine of Christ confirms, an obscure interpretation is given us, which intróduces inconsistency where there is none, and thus destroys the true sense of the doctrine, leaving nothing but words, and in reality re-establishing the Mosaic teaching with all its barbarous cruelty.

According to the commentaries of the Church, and those of the fifth century in particular, Christ did not destroy the written law, but confirmed it. But we are not told how He confirmed it, nor how the law of Christ and the Mosaic law can be supposed to be united into one. We find nothing in these commentaries but a play upon words. We are told that Christ kept the *Mosaic law* by the prophecies concerning Himself being fulfilled ; and that Christ fulfilled the law *through us*, through the faith of men in Him. No effort is made to solve the only question which is of essential importance to every believer, viz., how these two contradictory laws, referring to life, can be united into one. The inconsistency of the text which says that Christ does not destroy the law, with the one in which we read, ' It hath been said . . . but I say unto you ' (indeed the contradiction between the whole spirit of the Mosaic law and the doctrine of Christ) remains in all its force.

Let everyone who is interested in this question

examine for himself the commentaries on this passage given us by the Church, beginning from John Chrysostom to the present time. It is only after having read these that he will see clearly that, not only is no explanation of the contradiction given, but a contradiction has been skilfully inserted where there was none before. The impossible attempts at uniting what cannot be united are clear proof that this was not an involuntary mental error, but was effected with some definite purpose in view; that it was found necessary; and the cause of its having been found necessary is obvious.

Let us see what John Chrysostom says in answer to those who reject the Mosaic law ('Commentary of the Gospel according to St. Matthew,' vol. I, pp. 320, 321):

'On examining the ancient law which enjoins us to take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, the objection is raised,—How can He who speaks thus be righteous? What answer can we give? *Why, that it is, on the contrary, the best token of God's love towards man.* It was not that we should really take an eye for an eye that He gave us this law, but that we should avoid wronging others for fear of suffering the same at their hands. As, for instance, when threatening the Ninevites with destruction, His desire is not to destroy them (had He indeed decreed their destruction He would not have spoken of it); His purpose was only, by His menaces, to induce them to amend their lives, and, by so doing, turn His wrath aside. Thus likewise the hot-tempered, who are ready to put out their neighbours' eyes, are threatened with punishment, for the sole purpose of

making their fears of punishment restrain them from injuring their fellow-creatures. If this be cruelty there is cruelty likewise in the commandment that forbids murder, or that interdicts adultery. But such an argument would only prove a man to have reached the last stage of madness. And I so dread calling these commandments cruel, that I should rather be inclined *to consider a contrary law as wrong*, according to plain common sense. Thou callest God cruel because He hath enjoined taking an eye for an eye; but I say that many would have had a greater right to call Him cruel, as thou dost, had He not given this commandment.'

John Chrysostom plainly acknowledges the law of a tooth for a tooth to be the Divine law, and the reverse of that law—*i.e.* Christ's doctrine of non-resistance—to be wrong.'

Pages 322, 323: 'Let us suppose that the law is entirely cast aside,' says John Chrysostom further, 'that all fear of promised punishment is done away with, that the wicked are left to live according to their inclinations, without fear of punishment: adulterers, murderers, thieves, and perjurers. Would not all be overthrown; would not houses, market-places, cities, lands, seas, the whole universe be full of iniquity? This is obvious. For if even the existence of laws, fear and threats of punishment, can hardly keep the evil-intentioned within bounds, what would there then be to restrain men from evil deeds, if all obstacles were removed? What disasters would then rush in torrents into the lives of men! Cruelty does not lie in leaving the wicked free to act as they



please, but in letting the innocent man suffer without defending him. If a man were to collect a crowd of miscreants around him, and having furnished them with weapons, were to send them forth into the town to kill all those they met in the streets, could anything be more barbarous? And if another were to bind these armed men and imprison them, releasing the victims these miscreants had threatened with death, could anything be more humane?

But John Chrysostom does not tell us by what the other is to be guided in his definition of the wicked. May he not himself be a wicked man, and imprison the good.

‘Now apply this example to the law. He who gave the commandment “an eye for an eye” has bound the minds of the wicked in chains of fear, and may be compared to the man who bound the miscreants; but if no punishment were appointed for criminals, would it not be arming them with the weapons of fearlessness, and acting like him who gave weapons to the miscreants, and sent them forth into the town?’

If John Chrysostom does acknowledge the doctrine of Christ, he ought to have told us who is to take an ‘eye for an eye,’ or a ‘tooth for a tooth,’ and cast into prison. If He who gave the commandment, that is, God Himself, were to inflict the threatened punishment, there would be no inconsistency; but it must be done by men, the men who were forbidden to do so by the Son of God. God said, ‘An eye for an eye;’ the Son says, ‘Do not act thus.’ One of the two commandments must be acknowledged as just. John Chrysostom and the Church follow the com-



mandments of the Father—*i.e.*, the Mosaic law—and reject the commandments of the Son, while ostensibly professing His doctrine.

Christ rejects the Mosaic law, and gives His own in its stead. For him who believes in Christ there is no contradiction. He pays no heed to the Mosaic law, believes in Christ's doctrine, and fulfils it. Neither is there any contradiction for him who believes in the Mosaic law. The Hebrews do not consider the words of Christ valid, and they believe in the Mosaic law. There is a contradiction only for those who, while choosing to live according to the Mosaic law, try to persuade themselves and others that they believe in the doctrine of Christ; for those only whom Christ calls, 'Ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers.'

Instead of acknowledging one of the two—either the Mosaic law or the doctrine of Christ—we say that *both* are Divine truths.

But no sooner does the question touch upon life itself, than the doctrine of Christ is straightway cast aside, and the Mosaic law is acknowledged.

If we examine this false interpretation closely, we shall see in it one phase of the awful struggle between good and evil, light and darkness.

Christ appears amidst the Hebrews, who were entangled in countless minute rules, laid down by their Levites, and called by them the Divine law, each of which was preceded by the words, 'And God said to Moses.'

Not only the relations in which man stands to God, but the sacrifices, feast-days, fasts, the relations between men—public, civil, and family relations—all

the details of private life, circumcision, ablution of themselves and their cups, their clothes, all—even to the most trifling details—were encompassed by rules, and these were acknowledged as the commandments of God, the law of God. What could a prophet do—I do not say Christ-God—but what could a prophet, a teacher do, when teaching such a people, without first destroying the obligations of a law by which everything, down to the smallest detail of life, was thus regulated? Christ does what any other prophet would do. He takes from the old law, considered by the people as Divine, what is truly the law of God: He takes the basis principles, setting all the rest aside, and He adds to it His own revelation of the eternal law. Though all need not be cast aside, a law which is considered obligatory in all its minutest details must inevitably be violated. This is what Christ does, and He is accused of destroying the law of God; and He is crucified for this. But His teaching remains amongst His disciples, and passes on to other peoples. Yet, in the course of ages, and amongst the new peoples who receive Christ's truth, the same human interpretations and explanations shoot up. Again appear the shallow precepts of man, in place of the Divine revelation. Instead of the words, 'And God said to Moses,' we now read, 'By the revelation of the Holy Spirit.' Again the letter rather than the spirit of the doctrine is preferred. It is a striking fact that the doctrine of Christ is united to all this 'tora,' which He rejected. This 'tora' is said to be the revelation of the Spirit of Truth—*i.e.*, of the Holy Ghost—and so Christ is taken in the meshes of His own revelation.

And now, after 1800 years, the strange duty has fallen to my lot to discover the sense of Christ's doctrine as something new.

It was no discovery that I had to make ; I had to do what all those who seek to know God and His law have to do : to find out the eternal law of God from amidst the precepts that men call His law.

## VI.

NOW it has grown clear to me that Christ's law is truly *His* law, and not the mixed law of Moses and Christ. The claim of His doctrine distinctly repudiates the claim of the Mosaic law ; and, consequently, instead of the obscurity, diffuseness, and inconsistency which I had previously found in the Gospels, they now combine to form an indissoluble whole ; and the basis, or central maxim, of the entire doctrine is expressed in the simple, clear, and perfectly intelligible five commandments of Christ (Matt. v. 21-48) which I had hitherto failed to apprehend.

Mention is made in all the Gospels of the 'commandments of Christ,' and their fulfilment is enjoined.

All theologians speak of the commandments of Christ, but I never knew what these commandments were.

I supposed the commandment of Christ to be the exhortation to love God, and our neighbour as ourselves. I did not see that this could not be the commandment of Christ, seeing that it was a commandment given to the ancient Hebrews (see Deut. and Levit.). On reading the words, 'Whosoever there-

fore shall break one of *these commandments*, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be great in the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 19), I thought they referred to the Mosaic law. It never occurred to me that the new commandments of Christ were clearly and distinctly expressed in the verses 21-28 of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew. Nor did I notice that by the words, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . but I say unto you,' Christ gives us new and most definite commandments; annexed to the five quotations of the Mosaic law (reckoning the two quotations which refer to adultery as one), we find five new and definite commandments of Christ.

I had often heard about the Beatitudes, and had met with the enumeration and explanation of them in the course of the religious instruction given me in my youth; but I never heard a word about the commandments of Christ. To my great surprise I had to discover them.

I shall now point out what led me to the discovery. In Matt. v. 21-28, we read: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment (Exodus xx. 23). (22) But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the judgment; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. (23) Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; (24) leave there thy gift before the altar, and

go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (25) Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (26) Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.'

On a clear comprehension of the doctrine of 'non-resistance,' it seemed to me that the text quoted above must have the same application to life as that doctrine. I had formerly considered these words as meaning that we were to avoid all anger against a fellow-creature, that we were never to use abusive language, and were to live at peace with all, not excepting any ; but there stood a clause, in the text, which excluded all possibility of thus understanding it. It is said, 'whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause,*' and the idea of unconditional peace is annulled by the last, italicized words. They puzzled me. I sought for a solution of my doubts in theological commentaries ; but to my surprise I found that the interpretations of the Fathers of the Church were especially directed towards defining the cases in which anger may be excused and cannot be excused. Laying particular stress on the words 'without a cause,' commentators tell us the meaning of the text is that we are never to wound a man's feelings causelessly, nor use abusive language ; but add that anger is not always unjust, and in support of that opinion they cite instances of the anger of the apostles and the saints.



I was obliged to acknowledge that, though contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel, the interpretation of the Fathers, by which anger is accounted justifiable when, to use their own expression, it is 'to the glory of God,' was consistent, being based on the words 'without a cause,' which we find in verse 23. This clause entirely altered the sense of the saying.

Be not angry *without a cause*. Christ exhorts us to forgive all, to forgive without end; Christ Himself forgave, and when led away to be crucified, reproved Peter for defending Him against Malchus; and yet it would seem that Peter had good cause for anger. And the same Christ exhorts all men not to be angry *without a cause*, thus justifying anger if there be a reason for it, if it be not causeless! Is it not as if Christ, who came to preach peace to all simple-minded men, had, on second thoughts, added the words 'without a cause' to show that this precept did not apply to all cases indiscriminately—that anger might sometimes be justifiable? Commentators tell us that anger may be justifiable. 'But,' said I to myself, 'can any man be a fit judge of the reasonableness of his anger? Never yet have I seen an angry man who did not consider himself perfectly just in his anger. Each thinks his anger both lawful and necessary.' The words 'without a cause' seemed entirely to destroy the meaning of the text. But they were in the Gospel, and I could not set them aside. And yet it came to much the same as if to the saying 'Love thy neighbour,' were added the words 'thy neighbour that pleaseth thee.'

The words 'without a cause' destroyed the import



of the whole text for me. The verses 23, 24, in which we read that before praying we must be at peace with him that hath aught against us, which would have had a direct, obligatory sense without the words 'without a cause,' now acquired a conditional meaning.

It seemed to me that Christ must have meant to forbid all anger, all ill-will, and in order to suppress it, had enjoined each person, before he brought his gift to the altar—*i.e.*, before he drew near to God—to bethink him whether there is any man who is angry with him. And if there is one such, he must be reconciled to him first, and then he may bring his gift to the altar, or he may pray. It seemed thus to me, but, according to all commentaries, the sense of the passage was conditional.

In all commentaries we are told that we must try to be at peace with all men; but if that be impossible, on account of the perversity of our adversary, we must be at peace with him in mind, in our thoughts, and then his enmity will be no barrier to our prayer. Moreover, the words that declare that whosoever shall say 'Raca,' or 'Thou fool,' commits a great sin, always seemed most strange and unintelligible to me. If the words forbid abusive language, why are such weak epithets chosen, which can hardly be reckoned terms of abuse? And why was there so awful a threat against one who might, perhaps inadvertently, use as inoffensive a word as *raca*—*i.e.*, a worthless fellow? This seemed incomprehensible to me.

I felt sure that there was the same misunderstand-

ing here as I had found in the words 'judge not'; I felt sure that a simple, definite, and highly important commandment, which all have it in their power to fulfil, had been perverted, as in the preceding instance, into something almost incomprehensible. I felt sure that Christ had not used the words, 'be reconciled to thy brother,' in the sense now given them by our commentators—viz., 'be reconciled to thy brother *in mind*.'

Reconciled in mind! what can that mean? I thought that Christ meant exactly what He expressed in the words of the prophet: 'I will have mercy'—*i.e.*, love to all men—'and not sacrifice.' And therefore, if thou dost wish to find favour in God's sight, before repeating thy morning and evening prayer, or before attending public worship, reflect whether any be angry with thee; and if such an one be found, go and be reconciled to him first, and then thou mayest come and pray. Let thy reconciliation not be 'in mind' only. I saw that the interpretation which destroyed the direct and clear meaning of the text was based on the words 'without a cause.' Their omission would render the whole perfectly clear; but the canonical Gospel, in which stand the words 'without a cause,' and all commentaries upon it, were contrary to my interpretation.

Had I chosen arbitrarily to alter the sense of *this* passage, I might have done so with any other text as well; and might not other interpreters have done so too? All the difficulty lay in one little clause. This clause removed, all would be clear. So I endeavoured to find some philological explanation of

the words that should not destroy the sense of the text.

On consulting the dictionary, I saw the Greek word is *ειχνη*, and that it likewise means 'purposelessly, thoughtlessly.' I again read the text over attentively, to see if any other meaning could be given it, but found that the clause was evidently correct. I consulted the Greek dictionary, and the meaning given to the word was the same. I consulted the context, but the word is only once used in the Gospels—viz., in the passage in question. We find it several times in the Epistles. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 2) it is used in the same sense. Therefore there seemed to be no other possible rendering of the text, and I found myself obliged to believe that Christ said, 'Be not angry *without a cause*.' I must confess that, to believe in Christ's having uttered so indefinite a saying—which admits of an interpretation that reduces it to a mere nothing—seemed to me equivalent to an entire renunciation of the Gospel itself. A last hope was left me : was this clause to be found in all the transcripts of the Gospel ? I examined various translations. I looked in Griesbach's edition of the Gospels, in which he enumerates all the transcripts in which a similar expression is used ; and I found, to my great joy, that there were several references attached to this particular text. I examined them, and found that they referred to the very words, 'without a cause.' In the greater number of the transcripts of the Gospel, and in the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church, these words are omitted. Thus, the majority understood the text as I do. I

then consulted the first transcript of Tischendorf, but the words are not there. The shortest way to solve the problem would have been to look in Luther's translation of the Gospel; but the words are not to be found there either.

The clause which so entirely destroys the sense of Christ's doctrine was an addition made in the fifth century, and it is not to be found in any of the most trustworthy transcripts of the Gospel.

Some one had inserted the clause, and others had approved of it, and then tried to explain it.

Christ never could have added so monstrous a clause; and the simple, direct meaning of the text, which had first struck me, and must strike others, is the true one.

Nor is this all; for, no sooner did I understand that Christ's words forbade anger against any person whatever, than the command not to call a fellow-creature '*raca*,' or '*thou fool*,' struck me in a new light, and I could no longer consider it as being intended to forbid the use of abusive language. The untranslated word *raca* opened my eyes to the true sense. The word *raca* means 'trampled upon, set at nought, made of no account;' the word *rac* is a word very generally used, and it signifies 'excepting,' 'only not.' *Raca*, therefore, means a man unworthy of the title of man. We find the plural, *rekin*, used in the Book of Judges (ix. 4) in the sense of 'lost.' So this is the word we are forbidden by Christ to use in speaking of a fellow-creature. In the same manner does He forbid our saying 'Thou fool,' as being words by which we may consider ourselves justified in setting

aside our duty towards our neighbour. We give way to anger, wrong others, and allege for our justification that the man who has excited our anger is a lost man or a fool. And these are the epithets that we are forbidden by Christ to apply to any man. He forbids our giving way to anger against our fellow-creatures; He forbids our justifying our anger by calling its object a lost man or a fool.

And now, in the place of an indistinct, indefinite, and insignificant expression, subject to countless arbitrary interpretations, the first simple, clear, and distinct commandment of Christ arose before me, as contained in the verses 21-28: 'Be at peace with all men, and never consider thine anger as just. Never look upon any man as worthless or a fool, neither call him such' (verse 22). 'Not only shalt thou never think thyself justified in thine anger, but never shalt thou consider thy brother's anger as causeless; and therefore, if there be one who is angry with thee, be it even without a cause, before praying, go and be reconciled to him' (verses 23, 24). 'Endeavour to destroy all enmity between thyself and others, that their enmity may not grow and destroy thee' (verses 25, 26).

And now the second commandment of Christ, which also begins with a reference to the ancient law, grew clear to me also.

Matthew v. 27-30: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Exod. xx. 14-28). 'But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart' (verse



28). 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell' (verse 29). 'And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell' (verse 30).

Matthew v. 31, 32: 'It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement' (Deut. xxiv. 1). 'But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.'

I understood these words to signify that no man must ever admit, even in thought, the possibility of leaving the woman he was first united to for another a thing which is permitted by the Mosaic law.

As in His first commandment against anger, we are advised to stifle the feeling in its birth—the advice being further exemplified by the comparison of the man delivered up to the judge—so here Christ says that fornication is the consequence of men and women letting their thoughts dwell on sexual relations; and, to avoid this, we must set aside all that can excite such thoughts; and, when once united to a woman, we must never leave her, under any pretext whatever, because this opens the door to sinful indulgence.

I was struck by the wisdom of the saying. It tends to do away with all the evils resulting from sexual



relations. Men and women are to avoid all that can excite sensuality, being fully aware that nothing is more conducive to dissensions in the world than carnal pleasures, and knowing also that the law of nature is that the race should live together in couples, united in bonds that cannot be dissolved.

In the Sermon on the Mount the words, 'saving for the cause of fornication,' which had always seemed strange to me, struck me still more forcibly when I saw that they were considered as permitting divorce if the wife had committed adultery.

Besides there being something unworthy in the very way the idea is expressed, and in this strange exception standing side by side with the most important principles which the sermon contained—like a regulation in some code—the exception itself was in direct opposition to the fundamental idea of Christ's teaching.

I consulted the commentators of the Gospels, and all of them (John Chrysostom, page 365), and even theological critics like Reuss, affirm that these words mean, that Christ permits divorce if the wife have committed adultery; that in Christ's prohibition of divorce, in the nineteenth chapter, where we read 'saving for the cause of fornication,' the words have that meaning. I read the thirty-second verse over and over again, and came to the conclusion that this interpretation of the words was erroneous. In order to verify my opinion, I examined the context, and found, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew xix. Mark x., Luke xvi., and in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, a similar declaration of the indissolu-

bility of the marriage tie, *without exception of any kind.*

In the Gospel according to St. Luke, xvi. 18, we read : ' Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.'

In the Gospel according to St. Mark, x. 4-12, we read : ' For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.'

We find the same teaching in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, xix. 4-9.

In the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, vii. 1-12, the statement that depravity may be prevented by husbands and wives never forsaking each other, nor defrauding each other of their rights, is enlarged upon; and it is distinctly said that neither shall the husband in any case forsake his wife for another woman, nor the wife leave her husband for another man.

Thus we see that, according to the Gospels of Mark and Luke and the Epistle of Paul, divorce is

wholly forbidden. According to the interpretation that husband and wife are one flesh, joined together by God, which we find repeated in two of the Gospels, divorce is forbidden. According to the sense of the whole doctrine of Christ, who exhorts us to forgive all, not excluding the wife who has gone astray, it is forbidden. According to the sense of the whole text, which clearly points out that a man's leaving his wife brings depravity into the world, it is forbidden.

Whence, then, is the conclusion drawn that a wife who has committed adultery may be divorced, and on what is it grounded? On the very words of Matt. v. 32, which had so strangely struck me. It is alleged that these words prove that Christ permits divorce if the wife have committed adultery; and they are also repeated in the nineteenth chapter in numerous transcripts of the Gospel, and by many of the Fathers of the Church, instead of the words, 'except it be for fornication.'

I read the words over and over again, and it was long before I could understand them. I saw that there was probably something incorrect in the translation and interpretation, but could not for some time make out what it was. That there was a mistake was obvious. Placing his commandment in opposition to that of the Mosaic law, which says that if a man hate his wife he may put her away, giving her a writing of divorcement, Christ says: 'But I say unto you, That whosoever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.' There is no opposition in these words, and no mention made of the possibility or impossibility of divorce.

We are only told that he who putteth away his wife causes her to commit adultery. And then comes a clause which excepts the wife guilty of adultery. This exception is altogether strange and unexpected; it is indeed absurd, as it destroys even the dubious sense of the words. It is stated that the putting away of a wife causes her to commit adultery, and then the husband is exhorted to put away his wife if she be guilty of adultery; as if the wife who was guilty of adultery would not commit adultery!

Moreover, on a closer examination of the text, I saw that it was even grammatically incorrect. It is said: 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, *saving for the cause of fornication*, causeth her to commit adultery,' or, if we translate the word *παρεῖςτος* literally, 'besides fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.' The words refer to the husband who causes his wife to commit adultery by putting her away. Then why is the clause 'cause of fornication' inserted? If it were said that the husband who puts away his wife, besides being guilty of fornication, commits adultery, the sentence would be grammatically correct. But as the text stands, the noun 'husband' has one predicate — 'causes her,' etc.—and how does the phrase 'saving for the cause of fornication' refer to it? 'Cannot cause her to commit adultery, saving for the cause of adultery?' Even if the words 'wife' or 'her' were added, which is not the case, the words could have no reference to the predicate 'causes her.' According to the accepted interpretation, these words are considered as referring to the predicate 'putteth away'; but the verb 'putteth away' is not the predicate of

the principal sentence, for that is, 'causeth her to commit adultery.' Therefore, for what purpose are the words 'saving for (or besides) the cause of fornication' inserted? Be the wife guilty of adultery or not, by putting her away the husband causes her to commit that sin.

The sentence would have a meaning if in the place of the word 'fornication' we found the words 'lasciviousness,' 'debauchery,' or some similar word expressing, not an action, but a quality or a state.

Does it not mean, said I to myself, that he who divorces his wife causes her to commit adultery, and is besides guilty of debauchery himself? (For if a man divorce his wife, it is but in order to take to himself some other woman.) If the word used in the text be found to mean 'debauchery,' then the sense will be clear.

And again, as in the preceding instances, the text confirmed my surmise in a manner that left no room for doubt. What first struck me on reading the text was, that the word *πορνεία*, which is, in all translations except the English, rendered as 'adultery,' in the same way as *μοιχᾶσθαι*, is, in reality, quite another word. Perhaps the two words are synonymous, or are used in the Gospel in the same sense, I thought. So I referred both to the common dictionary and to the evangelical glossaries, and found that the word *πορνεία*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew 'zono,' the Latin 'fornicatio,' the German 'Hurerei,' the Russian 'распутство' (lewdness), has its own definite meaning, and in no dictionary is it considered as signifying adultery; 'adultère,' 'Ehebruch,' as it has



been translated by Luther. It properly implies a depraved state or disposition, and not an action, and cannot therefore be translated by the word 'adultery.' Moreover, I saw that the word 'adultery' is always expressed in the Gospel, and even in the above-named verses by another word, *μοιχέω*. And no sooner had I corrected this evidently intentional perversion of the text than I saw that the sense given to the context of the nineteenth chapter, and by our commentators, was altogether impossible; I saw that there could be no doubt about the word *πορνεία* referring only to the husband.

Every Greek scholar will construe the passage thus: *Κ* 'Παρεχτός; besides; λόγου, the matter; *πορνείας*, of lewdness; *ποιεί*, causes; *αὐτήν*, her; *μοιχᾶσθαι*, to commit adultery;' therefore the text stands word for word thus: 'He who divorces his wife, besides the sin of lewdness, causes her to commit adultery.'

We find exactly the same in the nineteenth chapter. No sooner is the incorrect translation of the word *πορνεία* amended, as well as that of the preposition *ἐπὶ*, which has been translated 'for'; no sooner is the word 'lewdness' placed instead of 'adultery,' and the preposition 'by' instead of 'for,' than it grows perfectly clear that the words *εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνεία* can have no reference to the wife. And as the words *παρεχτός λόγου πορνείας* can have no other meaning than 'besides the sin of lewdness of the husband,' so the words *εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνεία*, which we find in the nineteenth chapter, can have no reference to anything except the lewdness of the husband. It is said, *εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνεία*, which, being translated literally, is, 'if not by lewdness,' 'if not out



of lewdness.' And thus the meaning is clear that Christ in this passage refutes the notions of the Pharisees that a man who put away his wife, not out of lewdness, but in order to live matrimonially with another woman, did not commit adultery; Christ says that the repudiation of a wife, even if it be not done out of lewdness, but in order to be joined in bonds of matrimony to another woman, is adultery. And thus the sense is simple, clear, perfectly consistent with the whole doctrine, and both logically and grammatically correct.

It was with the greatest difficulty that I at last discovered this clear and simple meaning of the words themselves, and their harmony with the whole doctrine of Christ. And, in truth, read the words in the German or French versions, where it is said, 'pour cause d'infidélité,' or 'à moins que cela ne soit pour cause d'infidélité,' and you will hardly be able to guess that the text has quite another meaning. The word *παρεχρὸς*, which according to all dictionaries means 'excepté,' 'ausgenommen,' is translated in the French by a whole sentence, 'à moins que cela ne soit.' The word *πορνεία* is translated 'infidélité,' 'Ehebruch,' 'adultery.' And on this intentional perversion of the text is based an interpretation which destroys the moral, religious, grammatical, and logical sense of Christ's words.

And once more I received a confirmation of the truth that the meaning of Christ's doctrine is simple and clear. His commandments are definite, and of the highest practical importance; but the interpretations given us, based on a desire to justify existing

evils, have so obscured His doctrine that we can with difficulty fathom its meaning. I felt convinced that had the Gospel been found half burnt or half obliterated, it would have been easier to discover its true meaning than it is now; that it has suffered from such unconscientious interpretations, which have purposely concealed or distorted its true sense. In this last instance the special object of justifying the divorce of some Ivan the Terrible,\* which thus led to the misrepresentation of the Christian doctrine of matrimony, is more obvious than in the preceding cases to which reference has been made.

No sooner are all these interpretations thrown aside than vagueness and mistiness fade away, and the second commandment of Christ rises plainly before us: 'Take no pleasure in concupiscence; let each man if he be not an eunuch have a wife, and each woman a husband; let a man have but one wife, and a woman one husband, and let them never under any pretext whatsoever dissolve their union.'

Immediately after the second commandment we find a new reference to the ancient law, and the third commandment is given. Matthew v. 33—37, 'Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths' (Levit. xix. 12; Deut. xxiii. 21). (34) 'But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne'; (35) 'nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.' (36) 'Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make

\* The Czar of Russia (1533-1584).

one hair white or black.' (37) 'But let your word be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.'

In my former readings of the Gospel this text had always puzzled me. Not by its obscurity, as the text referring to divorce did ; nor by its inconsistency with other passages, as did the text which forbids anger only if it be 'without a cause;' nor, again, by the difficulty of fulfilling the commandment, like the text which enjoins our letting ourselves be smitten. It puzzled me, on the contrary, by its evident clearness and simplicity. Side by side with precepts, the depth and importance of which filled me with awe, I found an apparently useless, insignificant precept, very easy of fulfilment, and comparatively unimportant in its bearing upon myself or upon others. I had never sworn by Jerusalem, or by God, or by anything ; and had never found any difficulty in abstaining from so doing ; besides, it seemed to me that my swearing or not swearing could be of no importance to anyone. And longing to find some explanation of a precept which puzzled me by its simplicity, I consulted the commentaries on the Gospel. This once they helped me.

Commentators see in these words a confirmation of the third commandment of Moses, not to swear by God's name. They say that Christ, like Moses, forbids our taking God's name in vain. But they add besides that this precept given us by Christ is not always obligatory, and that in no case does it refer to the oath of allegiance to the existing powers, which every citizen is obliged to take. They choose out texts from Holy Scripture, not with the purpose of

confirming the direct meaning of Christ's precept, but in order to prove that it is possible and even necessary to leave it unfulfilled.

It is affirmed that Christ Himself sanctioned the taking of an oath in courts of law, by His answer, 'Thou hast said,' to the High Priest's words: 'I conjure thee by the living God.' It is likewise affirmed that the Apostle Paul called upon God to bear witness to the truth of his words, and that this was obviously an oath. It is affirmed that oaths were enjoined by the Mosaic law, and that Christ did not abrogate them, and only set useless, pharisaically hypocritical oaths aside.

And when I saw the meaning and the true object of the interpretation, it grew clear to me that Christ's law against swearing was not as insignificant and easy of fulfilment as I had thought before I had come to regard the 'oath of allegiance' as one of those which are forbidden by Christ.

And I said to myself: 'Does it not mean that the oath, which is so carefully fenced round by the Church commentaries, is also forbidden? Do not Christ's words oppose the very oath without which the division of men into separate governments would be an impossibility—the oath without which a military class would be impossible? Soldiers are those who act by violence; and they call themselves 'sworn men' (*прусаря*). Had I asked the grenadier I mentioned in a preceding chapter, how he solved the problem of the inconsistency between the Gospel and the military code, he would have answered that he had taken an oath, *i.e.*, sworn upon the Gospel.

All the military men I ever asked answered thus. Oaths are so essential in upholding the awful evils brought about by war and violence, that in France, where Christ's doctrine is entirely set aside, the oath of allegiance remains in full force. Indeed, had Christ not said, 'Swear not at all,' He *ought* to have said so. He came to destroy evil, and how great is the evil brought about in the world by the taking of oaths! Perhaps some may urge that this was an imperceptible evil in Christ's time. No assumption can be more gratuitous. Epictetus and Seneca enjoined all men to take no oaths. In the laws of Manou the same precept may be found. Why should I say that Christ did not see this evil, when He speaks of it so definitely and so forcibly?

He says: 'I say unto you, Swear not at all.' The saying is as clear, as simple, and as indubitable as the words, 'judge not,' 'condemn not;' and it gives as little scope for false interpretation, the less so as the words 'Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatever is more than these cometh of evil,' are subjoined.

Now if Christ by this teaching exhorts us always to fulfil the will of God, how dare a man swear to obey the will of man? The will of God may not always coincide with the will of man. Christ tells us so in this very text. He says (verse 36): 'Swear not by thy head, for not only thy head but every hair on it is subject to the will of God.' We find the same thing taught in the Epistle of James, who says (chapter v., verse 12): 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the



earth, neither by any other oath ; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.' The Apostle tells us *why* we are not to swear. Though the taking of an oath may be no sin in itself, he who swears falls into condemnation, and therefore shall *no man* swear. Can any language be more clear than the words of Christ and of this Apostle are ?

But my ideas on this point were in so confused a state that for some time I went on asking myself, with surprise, 'Does the precept really mean this ? How is it that all swear by the Gospel ? It cannot be.'

But I had read the commentaries on the Gospel, and saw that what I deemed impossible had, nevertheless, been done. The same remark has to be made in reference to this as to the texts: 'Judge not,' 'Give not way to anger,' 'Never break the union of husband and wife.' We have set up our own institutions: we love them, and choose to consider them sacred. Christ, whom we acknowledge to be God, comes, and He says that our rules of life are bad. We acknowledge Him to be God, yet we do not choose to set our rules of life aside. What is left then for us to do ? When, by inserting the words 'without a cause,' we turn the commandment against anger into a meaningless sentence ; when, like crafty lawyers, we interpret the sense of the commandment in a manner which gives it a contrary meaning to that designed by Him who spake it, as we do if, instead of prohibiting altogether the putting away of a wife, we declare divorce to be lawful and just, we put our institutions in the place of truth. But if it



be impossible to interpret the words otherwise than as I have indicated, in the treatment of the precepts 'Judge not,' 'Condemn not,' 'Swear not at all,' then we boldly act in direct opposition to Christ's doctrine, while asserting that we strictly fulfil it, if we cleave to traditional interpretations.

The chief obstacle to our understanding that the Gospel wholly forbids our taking an oath is, that the so-called Christian teachers boldly insist upon men's taking oaths *upon the Gospel*; and in this acting contrary to the Gospel. How can it come into the head of a man who is made to take an oath on the Gospel, or the crucifix, that that crucifix is sacred for the very reason that He who forbade our swearing was crucified upon it? He who takes the oath, perhaps kisses the very passage which so clearly and definitely says, 'Swear not at all.'

But such boldness no longer confounded me. I clearly saw that in the fifth chapter, verses 33-37, lay the third definite and practicable commandment of Christ, which may be thus stated: 'Never take an oath under any circumstances.' Every oath is extorted from men for evil.

After this third commandment stands a fourth reference to the Mosaic law, and then the fourth commandment is presented. Matthew v. 38-42: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' (39) 'But I say unto ye that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' (40) 'And if any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.'

(41) 'And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.' (42) 'Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.'

I have already spoken of the direct meaning of these words, and of our having no foundation whatever for interpreting them otherwise. The various commentaries upon them, from John Chrysostom to the present time, are truly surprising. We all admire the words, and each one tries to find some profound hidden meaning in them; but we usually fail to see that they mean *exactly what they express*. Ecclesiastical commentators, unmindful of the authority of Him they acknowledge as God, unhesitatingly limit the meaning of His words. They say: 'It is clearly understood that the precepts of long-suffering non-retaliation, being especially directed against the vindictiveness of the Hebrews, do not exclude either the right of setting limits to the progress of evil *by the punishment of evil-doers*, or private, individual endeavours to uphold the inviolability of truth, to amend the wicked, or to deprive evil-doers of the possibility of injuring others; the Divine commandments of the Saviour would otherwise be reduced to mere words, and would lead only to the progress of evil and the repression of virtue. The Christian's love should be like God's love; but as God's love limits and *punishes evil* only in proportion as it is more or less needful for the glory of God or the salvation of our brethren, so is it the duty of those in authority to limit the progress of evil by punishments' ('Exposition of the Gospel,' by the Archim.

Michael, based on the Commentaries of the Fathers of the Church).

Neither do learned and free-thinking Christians scruple to correct the sense of Christ's words. They affirm that His sayings are sublime, but impracticable; that the application of the precept of non-resistance would destroy the whole organization of life, which we have set up so well; such is the opinion of Renan, Strauss, and other free-thinking commentators.

Yet if we treat the words of Christ in the same way that we do the words of any man who may chance to speak to us, *i.e.*, if we suppose that He says what He means, all profound interpretations will become unnecessary. Christ says: 'I find that the way you have regulated your lives is both foolish and bad. I propose another way.' And then He gives us His precepts in the verses 38-42. Does it not seem right that, before correcting these words, they should at least be understood? And this is just what none of us choose to do. We decide beforehand that the present organization of our lives, which His words tend to destroy, is the sacred law of mankind.

I had not considered our way of living as either good or sacred, and therefore I came to understand *this* commandment before I did the others. And when I understood these words exactly in the sense in which they were uttered, I was struck by their truth, clearness, and force. Christ says: 'You think to destroy evil by evil. That is irrational. In order that there should be no evil, *do no evil.*' And then, after enumerating all that is evil in our social adjustments, Christ exhorts us to act otherwise.

The fourth commandment, I have said, was the one which I understood first, and it opened up to me the true meaning of all the rest. The fourth clear, simple commandment, which it is within the power of all to obey, says: 'Never resist evil by violence; never return violence for violence. If anyone smites thee, bear it; if anyone take away what is thine, let him have it; if anyone makes thee labour, do so; if anyone wants to have what thou considerest to be thine own, give it up to him.'

And after this fourth commandment stands a fifth reference to the Mosaic law, and the fifth commandment. Matthew v. 43-48: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy' (Levit. xix. 17-18). (44) 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' (45) 'That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' (46) 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' (47) 'And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the heathens so?' (48) 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

I had formerly considered these words as explaining, amplifying, and giving more emphasis to, nay, even exaggerating, the doctrine of non-resistance. But having already found the simple, definite, and

applicable sense of each of the preceding texts which begin by a reference to the ancient law, I had a presentiment that I should find some fresh meaning here also. I had observed that a commandment was annexed to each reference to the ancient law, and that each verse of the commandment had its own import, and could not be turned aside; and I was sure that would prove to be the fact here also. The last words which we repeated in the Gospel according to St. Luke say that, as God makes no distinction between men, but pours down His blessings upon all, so should we be like our Father in heaven, and make no distinction between men; not acting as the heathen do, but loving all men, and doing good to all: these words were very clear; they seemed to me an explanation and commendation of some clearly defined precept, but what that precept precisely was I could not for a long time make out. 'Love one's enemy.' That was impossible. It was one of those beautiful utterances which cannot be considered otherwise than as presenting an unattainable moral ideal. It was either too much or it meant nothing. We may avoid wronging our enemy, but to love him is impossible. Christ cannot have commanded what we cannot fulfil. Moreover, the very first words in reference to the ancient law, 'It hath been said, *Hate thine enemy,*' were dubious. In the preceding passages Christ quotes the exact, authentic words of the Mosaic law; but in this one He cites words which were never used. He seems to calumniate the ancient law.

The various commentaries on the Gospel which I



consulted helped me no more than they had done in my former doubts. All commentators acknowledge that the words 'hate thine enemy' do not stand in the Mosaic law; but by none of them is there any explanation of the incorrect quotation given. They tell us that it is hard to love one's enemies—the wicked; and, commenting on Christ's words, they add, that though a man cannot love his enemy, yet he may neither wish him evil, nor actually wrong or injure him. It is persistently instilled into us that it is our bounden duty to denounce evil-doers, *i.e.*, to oppose our enemy; and the various steps are mentioned by which this virtue may be attained; and thus, according to the interpretation given by the Church, the final conclusion is that Christ, without any ostensible reason, quotes the words of the Mosaic law incorrectly, and has uttered many beautiful, but in themselves useless and impracticable, sayings.

It seemed to me that this could not be a true statement of the case. I felt sure that there was as clear and definite a sense in *these* words as I had found in the first four commandments. In order to comprehend the real meaning of the text, I endeavoured, first of all, to take in the sense of the incorrect reference to the Mosaic law: 'Ye have been told, Hate thine enemy.' It is not without some distinct purpose that, before giving each of His own precepts, Christ quotes the words of the old law, 'Thou shalt not kill,' 'thou shalt not commit adultery,' etc., and places His doctrine in opposition to them. Now, if we do not comprehend what meaning Christ attached to the



words He quotes, neither can we comprehend the duty which He enjoins. It seemed to me that the first point it was necessary to make out was, for what purpose Christ had cited words which are not found in the Mosaic law.

Here we find two precepts set in opposition to each other: 'Ye have been told, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy;' so it is obvious that the basis of the *new* commandment must be the very difference between these two precepts of the ancient law. In order to see the distinction more clearly, I asked myself, 'What do the words "neighbour" and "enemy" mean, in the language of the Gospel?' And on consulting the dictionary and other passages of the Bible, I found that the word 'neighbour' in the Hebrew language always signifies 'a Hebrew.' In the Gospel, a similar definition of the word 'neighbour' is given in the parable of the good Samaritan. According to the Hebrew lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour?' a Samaritan could not be his neighbour. The same definition of the word 'neighbour' is given in the Acts of the Apostles, vii. 27. The word 'neighbour,' as used in the Gospel, signifies a 'fellow-countryman,' one who belongs to the same nation. And I hence conclude that the antithesis used by Christ in this passage, when quoting the words of the law, 'Ye have been told, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,' places a 'fellow-countryman' in opposition to 'a stranger.' I then asked myself what the word 'enemy' meant, according to the Hebrews. It is almost always used, in the Gospel, in the sense, not of a private, but of a common enemy a

national enemy: Luke i. 71; Matthew xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 43, and elsewhere. The use of the word 'enemy' in the singular number, in the text, 'hate thine enemy,' made it clear to me that the words referred to a national enemy. The singular expresses an enemy taken in a collective sense. In the Old Testament the word 'enemy,' when used in the singular, always implies a national enemy.

No sooner did I comprehend this than my difficulty in understanding how it was that Christ, who always quoted the original words of the law, in this instance inserts the words, 'Ye have been told, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy,*' which are not in the Mosaic law, was solved. To remove all doubts as to the meaning of the passage, we have only to take the word 'neighbour' as meaning a 'fellow-countryman.' Christ speaks of the Mosaic regulations concerning a national enemy. He combines in the single expression 'to hate, to wrong an enemy,' all the various precepts dispersed through the Scriptures by which the Hebrews are enjoined to oppress, kill, and destroy other nations. And He says: 'Ye have been told that ye shall love your own people, and hate the enemies of your nation; but I say unto you, that ye love all, without distinction of their nationality.'

And no sooner had I understood this than the second and chief difficulty, *i.e.*, how the words 'love thine enemies' were to be understood, was removed. It is impossible to love our personal enemies. But we *can* love men of another nation as we do those of our own people. I saw clearly that by the words, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Love thy neighbour, and

hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies,' Christ asserts that all men are accustomed to consider their fellow-countrymen as their neighbours and men of other nations as their enemies, and this He forbids our doing. He says that, according to the law of Moses, a distinction was made between him who was a Hebrew and him who was not, but was considered as a national enemy; and then He commands that no such distinction should be made between them. Indeed, in the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke we find that, immediately after this precept, He says that all are equal before God, that the same sun shines on all, the same rain falls upon all. God makes no distinction between men, and does equal good to all; ought not men to do likewise, without recognising distinctions of nationality?

Thus I again found ample confirmation of the simple and practicable sense of Christ's words. Instead of an indistinct and indefinite philosophy, I discovered a clear definite precept, which all have it within their power to fulfil. To make no distinction between one's own and other nations, and so to avoid the natural results of these distinctions, such as being at enmity with other nations, going to war, taking part in war, arming for war, etc., and to treat all men, whatever nation they belong to, as we do our fellow-countrymen, was the requirement of Christ. All this was so simple and so clear that I was surprised I had not understood it at once.

The hindrance in my way was the same that had prevented my comprehending the prohibition of courts

of law and oaths. It is difficult to conceive that the very courts of law, which are inaugurated with Christian prayer, and consecrated by those who regard themselves as the fulfillers of Christ's law, are incompatible with the Christian faith, and are in direct opposition to Christ's doctrine. Nor is it easier to conceive that the oath of allegiance, which all men are made to take by the keepers of Christ's law, is expressly forbidden by that very law. And it is hardest of all to conceive that, to uphold what is considered not only as necessary and natural, but even grand and glorious, as love of one's native land—its defence, its aggrandizement, war against an enemy, and so on—is not only sinning against the law of Christ, but even abjuring it. We have become so estranged from the doctrine of Christ, that this very estrangement is now the chief obstacle to our understanding it. We have turned a deaf ear to His words, and forgotten all He taught us of the life we are to lead; how that we should not kill, nor even bear malice against a fellow-creature; that we should never defend ourselves, but turn our cheeks to be smitten; that we should love our neighbour, etc. We have grown so used to call 'a Christ-loving army' the men who devote their lives to murder; who put up prayers to Christ for victory over the enemy; whose pride and glory are in murder; and who have raised the symbol of murder, *i.e.*, the sword, into something almost sacred, so that he who is deprived of that symbol is considered as having been disgraced; we have grown so used to all this, I repeat, that it now appears to us that Christ did not forbid war;

and that, if He had intended to do so, He would have expressed His meaning more clearly.

We forget that Christ could never have thought it possible that men who believe in His doctrine of humility, love, and universal brotherhood would calmly and consciously institute the murder of their brethren.

Christ cannot have supposed it possible, and therefore He could no more have forbidden a Christian to make war, than could a father, while admonishing his son to live honestly, without injuring or defrauding others, exhort him not to cut men's throats on the high road.

Not one of the Apostles, not one of Christ's disciples, could have supposed it necessary to forbid a Christian's committing murder, which is miscalled war. See what Origen says in his answer to Celsus, chapter 63 :

'Celsus exhorts you to help the sovereign with all your strength, to take part in his duties, to take up arms for him, to serve under his banner, if necessary to lead out his army to battle. Moreover, we may say, in answer to those who, being ignorant of our faith, require the murder of men of us, that even their high-priests do not soil their hands in order that their God may accept their sacrifice. No more do we.' And concluding by the explanation that Christians do more good by their peaceful lives than soldiers do, Origen says : 'Thus we fight better than any for the safety of our sovereign. *We do not, it is true, serve under his banners, and we should not, even were he to force us to do so.*'

It was thus that the first Christians regarded war



and thus their teacher spoke when addressing the great men of this world, at the time when hundreds and thousands of martyrs were perishing for the Christian faith.

But in our times the question whether a Christian ought to take part in war never seems to occur to any. Youths brought up according to the Church law, which is called the Christian law, go every autumn, at fixed periods, to the conscription halls, and, with the assistance of their spiritual pastors, there renounce the law of Christ. A short time ago a peasant refused to enter the military service, grounding his refusal on the words of the Gospel. The clergy all tried to persuade the man that his view of the matter was erroneous ; and as the peasant still believed in Christ's words, and not in theirs, he was cast into prison, and kept there till he denied Christ. And this takes place although we, Christians, received 1800 years ago a perfectly clear and definite commandment from our God, which said, ' Never consider men of another nation as thine enemies ; look upon all men as brethren, and behave towards all men as thou dost towards thy fellow-countrymen ; therefore shalt thou not kill those whom thou callest thine enemies ; love all and do good to all.'

And when I had understood these simple, definite commandments, which admit of no other interpretation, I asked myself, What would the world be if all Christians believed that these commandments must be *fulfilled*, in order to attain happiness, instead of treating them only as commandments which must be sung or read in churches, in order that we may find



favour in the eyes of God? What would the world be if people did but as firmly believe in the obligatory character of these commandments as they now do in the necessity of daily prayer; of attending public worship every Sunday; of eating 'fast-food' on Fridays, and receiving the Sacrament every year? What would the world be, if all men did but as firmly believe in these commandments as they do in the prescriptions of the Church? And I pictured to myself men and women, in Christian society, living up to these commandments, and instilling the same into new generations; ourselves and our children no longer taught, both by word and deed, that man must maintain his own dignity, must defend his own rights (which cannot be done without humbling or offending others), but, instead, taught that no man has any rights, that none can be superior or inferior to another, that only he who tries to rise above all others is lower and more degraded than others,—that there is no feeling more debasing for a man to cherish than that of anger against another,—that the seeming insignificance or foolishness of a man can never justify either anger or enmity. Instead of our present social adjustments—from the show-glasses of shops to theatres, novels, and millinery—whose tendency is but to sensuality, I pictured to myself that we, and our children, were taught, by word and deed, that the pleasures of sensational books, theatres, and balls was the basest kind of pleasured; that every action whose aim was the embellishing or showing-off of our persons was base and disgusting. Instead of our present social adjustments, by which it is considered necessary, and

even in a sense right, that a young man should 'sow his wild oats' before marriage,—instead of a life in which separation between husband and wife is regarded as an ordinary thing,—instead of the acknowledged necessity for the existence of a class of women who serve to pamper depravity,—instead of the permission and authorization of divorce, I pictured to myself that we were taught, both by precept and by example, that a single, unmarried state, for a man in all his virility, was an anomaly and a shame,—that a man's leaving the woman he was united to, or taking another in her place, was not only as unnatural a proceeding as incest, but a cruel and inhuman deed. Instead of our lives being based upon violence, instead of each of us being either chastened himself or chastising others from childhood to old age, I pictured to myself that we were taught, both by precept and by example, that vengeance is but a base instinct; that violence is not only shameful, but deprives man of his true happiness; that the proper joys of life are only those which need no violence to protect them; that it is not he who despoils others, or keeps what is his own out of the hands of others, and makes others serve him, who is the most deserving of respect, but, rather, he who gives most, and who helps others most. Instead of considering it very right and lawful that each man should take an oath, and thus give away the most precious of his possessions, *i.e.*, his whole life into the keeping of another, I pictured to myself that we were taught to regard the intelligent will of man as that 'holiest of holies' which no man can ever give away; and that to promise anything with an oath is

to renounce one's own rational self, and is an outrage against all that is most holy in man. I pictured to myself that instead of the enmity towards other nations which is instilled into us under a semblance of patriotism—instead of the praise of murder or war, which we, from our childhood, look upon as a glorious thing—there was instilled into us the dread and scorn of all those diplomatic or military institutions which serve to disunite men; that to admit the existence of states, laws, frontiers, countries, etc., is but a proof of the most brutal ignorance; that to go to war, *i.e.*, to kill men who are complete strangers to us, without any reason, is the most horrid crime, of which only a lost and depraved man, degraded to the rank of a wild beast, is capable. I pictured to myself that all men believed in this, and I asked myself, 'What would the world be then?'

Formerly I had more than once asked myself what the fulfilment of the doctrine of Christ, as I then understood it, would lead to, and the involuntary answer had been, 'To nothing at all.' We shall all go on praying, receiving the Holy Sacrament, believing in our redemption and salvation, in the redemption and salvation of the whole world through Christ, and still this salvation will not be brought about by ourselves; but Christ will come again, in His appointed time, to judge the quick and the dead, and then the kingdom of God will be established on earth, independently of the life which we have led. But the doctrine of Christ, as I now understand it, has another signification: the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth *depends upon ourselves*. The fulfilment of

Christ's doctrine, as expressed in the five commandments, establishes this kingdom of God. The kingdom of God on earth is peace amongst all men. Peace among men is the highest earthly bliss which man can attain. It was thus that the Hebrew prophets pictured the kingdom of God to themselves. And it is thus that each human heart ever has and ever will picture it.

The substance of the entire doctrine of Christ is the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth, and that brings peace to all men. In the Sermon on the Mount, in His conversation with Nicodemus, in the mission given by Him to the disciples, in all His teachings, He speaks of what causes division among men, and prevents their living in peace, and entering the kingdom of God. All Christ's parables are definitions of the kingdom of God—they all seek to instil into us that it is only by loving our brethren, and being at peace with them, that we can enter the kingdom. John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ, says that the kingdom of God is at hand, and that Jesus Christ will give it unto the world.

Christ says that He brings peace on earth (John xiv. 27): 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

These five commandments of Christ do indeed give peace to men. The tendency of all the five commandments is to procure peace amongst men. Let men but believe in the doctrine of Christ, and obey it, and there will be peace on earth; not the peace established by

man, which is fleeting and transitory, but general, inviolable, eternal peace.

The first commandment says : Be at peace with all men, nor consider any man as worthless or foolish (Matt. v. 22). If peace be destroyed, use thy utmost endeavours to re-establish it. The service of God is the annihilation of all enmity (Matt. v. 23, 24). Let the least disagreement be followed by immediate reconciliation, less thou swerve from the true life. This commandment includes all in itself. But Christ foresees the temptations of the world which destroy peace among men, and gives a second commandment against the seductions of sexual relations which are destructive of peace : Do not consider carnal beauty to lust after it ; avoid the temptation (28, 30) ; let each man have one wife, and each woman one husband ; and let them never leave each other, under any pretext whatsoever (32). Another temptation is the taking of oaths, for it leads men into sin. Know, therefore, that to do so is to sin, and consequently never make any vow (34, 35). The third temptation is to vengeance, which is called human justice ; never take vengeance on any man ; nor seek to excuse thyself by saying thou hast received injury at the hands of another ; bear the wrong done thee, and return not evil for evil (38, 42). The fourth temptation arises from the distinction made between nations, the enmity between races and states. Know that all men are brethren, and sons of the same God, and never destroy peace in the name of national interests (43, 48). Let men leave but one of these commandments unfulfilled, and peace will be destroyed. Let men fulfil all these



commandments, and the kingdom of peace will be established on earth. These commandments exclude all evil from the relationships of men.

The fulfilment of Christ's commandments will make the lives of men such as each human heart seeks and longs for. All men will be brethren ; each will be at peace with the other, and each will be free to enjoy all the blessings of this world during the term of life allotted to him by God. Men will turn their 'swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.' And on earth will be established the kingdom of God ; the kingdom of peace that was promised by the prophets, which drew nearer with John the Baptist, and which Christ announced in the words of Isaiah : 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.'

The simple and clear commandments of peace, given by Christ, by which all causes of dissension are foreseen and turned aside, reveal the kingdom of God on earth to men. Thus Christ is truly the Messiah.

## VII.

Why does man not *do* the things which Christ enjoins, and which can give him the highest earthly felicity—the felicity he has ever longed to attain? The answer as usually given, with slight variations of expression, is that the doctrine of Christ is indeed



sublime, and its fulfilment would establish the kingdom of God on earth, but it is *difficult*, and therefore *impracticable*.

It is in the nature of man to strive after what is best. Each doctrine of life is but a doctrine of what is best for man. If men have pointed out to them what is really best for them, how come they to answer that they wish to do what is best, but cannot?

Human intellect, ever since man has existed, has been directed towards discovering what is *best* amongst all the demands that are made both in individual and in social life. Men struggle for land, for any object that they may want, and then end by dividing all amongst themselves, each calling what he may get his 'personal property'; they find that though difficult of adjustment, it is better arranged thus, and they keep to their own property. Men fight to get wives for themselves, and then come to the conclusion that it is better for each to have his own family; and though it may be hard to maintain a family, men keep to their property, their families, and all else they are said to possess. No sooner do men find it *best* for themselves to act in a particular way, than they proceed to act in that way, however hard it may be. Then what do we mean by saying the doctrine of Christ is sublime, a life in accordance with His doctrine would be a better one than the one we now lead, but we *cannot* lead the life that would be best for us, because it is *hard to do so*?

If 'hard' mean that it is hard to give up the momentary satisfaction of our desires for some great and good end, why do we not say, as well, that it is

hard to plough the ground in order to have bread ; to plant apple-trees in order to have apples? Every being endowed with the least germ of reason knows that no great good can be attained without trouble and difficulty. And now we say that though Christ's doctrine is sublime, we can never put it in practice, because it is hard to do so. Hard, because its observance would deprive us of what we have always possessed. Have we never heard that it may be better for us to suffer and to lose, than never to suffer and always to have our desires satisfied?

Man may be but an animal, and nobody will find fault with him for being such ; but a man cannot reason that he chooses to be only an animal ; no sooner does he reason than he admits himself to be a rational being, and, making this admission, he cannot help recognising a distinction between what is rational and what is irrational. Reason does not command, it only enlightens.

While groping about in the darkness in search of the door, I bruise my hands and knees. A man comes with a light, and I see the door. I can no longer bruise myself against the wall now that I see the door, still less can I assert that, though I see the door and feel convinced the best plan would be to enter it, it is hard to do so, and I prefer bruising my knees against the wall.

There must evidently be some strange misconception in the argument, that the doctrine of Christ is good, and conducive of good to the world, but man is weak, man is bad, and, while wishing to act for the

best, he acts for the worst, and therefore he cannot do what he knows is best for himself.

This notion must be the result of some false assumption. It is only by assuming that what is—is not, and that what is not—is, that man can have arrived at so strange a negation of the possibility of fulfilling a doctrine which, as he himself admits, would give him happiness.

The assumption which has brought mankind to accept this notion is based on the dogmatical Christian creed—the creed which is taught to all members of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Churches, from their earliest childhood.

This creed, according to the definition given by believers, is an acknowledgment of the existence of things that seem to be (a definition given by St. Paul and repeated in works on divinity and catechisms as the best definition of faith). It is this belief that has brought mankind to the singular conviction that the doctrine of Christ is good, but cannot be put in practice.

The doctrine of this creed is literally as follows : God eternal, Three Persons in one God, chose to create a world of spirits. The bountiful God created that world of spirits for their happiness ; but it chanced that one of the spirits grew wicked, and therefore unhappy. Some time passed away, and God created another world, a material world, and created man, likewise for happiness. God created man happy, immortal, and sinless. Man was happy because he enjoyed all the blessings of life without labour ; im-

mortal, for he was always to live thus; sinless, for he knew not evil.

Man was tempted in Eden by the spirit of the first creation, that had grown wicked; and from that time man fell, and other fallen men like him were born into the world; men laboured, sickened, suffered, died, struggled morally and physically; *i.e.*, the imaginary man became the real man, such as we know him to be; and we have no grounds for imagining him ever to have been otherwise. The state of man who labours, suffers, strives after good, avoids evil, and dies; this state, which is *real*, and beyond which we can imagine no other, is not the *true* state of man, according to this orthodox belief, but it is a temporary, accidental state, unnatural to him.

And though, according to this teaching, this state of man has continued for all men from the expulsion of Adam out of Eden, *i.e.*, from the beginning of the world to the birth of Christ, and has continued in the same way since that time, believers are bound to think that this is only an accidental, temporary state. According to this teaching the Son of God, God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, was sent down from heaven by God, and was made man, to save men from this accidental, temporary state, unnatural to them, to deliver them from the curse laid upon them by the same God for the sin of Adam, and to re-establish them in their former natural state of perfect happiness, *i.e.*, of health, immortality, innocence, and idleness. According to this teaching, again, the Second Person of the Trinity, redeemed the sin of Adam by the fact that men crucified Him, and thus put an end to the

unnatural state of man, which had lasted from the beginning of the world. And from that time man believed in Christ, and became again such as he was before the fall, immortal, healthy, sinless, and idle.

The orthodox teaching does not dwell at any length upon the consequent results of the redemption, according to which, after the death of Christ, the earth should have begun to yield up her fruits to believers without labour, sickness should have ceased, and mothers should have given birth to their offspring without suffering; for, however great be their faith, it is difficult to instil into those who find labour hard, and sickness painful, that labour is *not* hard,<sup>7</sup> and suffering is *not* painful. Great stress, however, is laid on that part of the teaching, which says that 'death and sin are no more.'

It is confidently asserted that the dead live. And as the dead cannot possibly tell us whether they be dead or alive, any more than a stone can tell whether it can speak or not, this absence of all denial is taken as a proof of the assertion that those who are dead are not dead. And with yet greater solemnity and assurance is it asserted that, after the coming of Christ on earth, man is delivered from sin by his faith in Him, *i.e.*, that man has no need of reason to enlighten his path in life, and has no need to strive after what is best for Himself; he has only to believe that Christ redeemed him from sin to become sinless, *i.e.*, perfectly good. Thus, according to this doctrine, men must think their intellect impotent, and that therefore they are sinless, *i.e.*, cannot err.

The true believer must fancy that ever since Christ



came into the world, the earth yields fruit without labour; that children are brought into the world without suffering; that there is no sickness, no death, no sin—*i.e.*, no errors. He must imagine that what *is not, is*; and what *is, is not*.

Such is the teaching of our strictly logical theory of theology.

This teaching seems innocent in itself. But a deviation from truth can never be innocent; it entails consequences, more or less important, according to the importance of the subject of the untruth. In this case the subject of the untruth is the whole life of man.

This teaching calls an individual blissful, sinless; and eternal life the *true life, i.e.*, a life which nobody has ever seen, and which does not exist. And the life which *is*, the only one which we know, which we lead, and which mankind has ever led, is, according to this teaching, a fallen, wicked life.

The struggle between the intellectual and animal nature of man, which lies in the soul of each, and is the substance of the life of each man, is entirely set aside. The struggle is made to refer to what befel Adam at the creation of the world. And the question: 'Am I to eat the apples which tempt me?' according to this teaching, no longer applies to man. The question was solved in the negative, once and for ever, by Adam in Paradise. Adam sinned, that is, Adam erred, and we all fell irrevocably, and all our endeavours to live rationally are useless, and even godless. I am irrevocably bad, and I must know it. My salvation does not lie in the fact that I can order my



life by my reason, and, having learnt to know good from evil, do what is best. No, Adam sinned once for all, and Christ has, once and for ever, set the evil right; and all that is left me to do, is to mourn over the fall of Adam, and rejoice in my salvation through Christ.

According to this teaching, not only are the love of good and truth, which are innate in man, his endeavours to enlighten by his reason the various phenomena of life, and his spiritual life, deemed unimportant, but they are all vain-glory and pride.

Our life here on earth, with all its joys, with all its charms, with all its struggles between light and darkness, the lives of all those who lived before, my own life with its inward struggles and consequent victories of reason, is not the true life, but is a hopelessly spoiled, fallen life; the true life, the sinless life, according to this teaching, lies only in faith, *i.e.*, in fancy, *i.e.*, in madness.

Let a man but set aside the teaching he has imbibed from his childhood, let him transfer himself in thought into a new man, not brought up in that doctrine, and then let him imagine in what light this teaching would appear to him. Would he not deem it complete insanity?

Strange and awful though it was to think thus, I was forced to admit that it was even so, for only thus could I explain to myself the strikingly inconsistent, senseless arguments, which I heard all around me, against the possibility of fulfilling the doctrine of Christ. *'It is good and would lead to happiness, but men cannot fulfil it.'*

It is only the assumption that what does not exist exists, and what exists does not exist, that can have brought mankind to so surprising an inconsistency. And I found that false assumption in the so-called Christian faith, which has been preached during 1500 years.

Believers are not the only persons who say that the doctrine of Christ is good, but impracticable. Unbelievers, men who either do not believe, or think that they do not believe, in the dogmas of the fall and the redemption, say the same. Men of science, philosophers, and men of cultivated minds in general, who consider themselves perfectly free from superstition, likewise argue the impracticability of Christ's doctrine. They do not believe, or at least think that they do not believe, in anything, and therefore consider themselves as having nothing to do, either with superstition, the fall of man, or with redemption. I thought so too, formerly. I also thought that these learned men had other grounds for denying the practicability of the doctrine of Christ. But, on examining closer into the basis of their negation, I clearly saw that unbelievers had the same false idea, that life is not what it *is*, but what it *seems to be*; and that this idea has the same basis as the idea of believers. Men who call themselves 'unbelievers' do not, it is true, believe either in God, in Christ, or in Adam; but they believe in the fundamental false assumption of the right of man to a life of perfect bliss, just as firmly as theologians do.

However privileged science, with her philosophy, may boast of being the judge and the guide of intellect, she is, in reality, not its guide, but its slave. The

view taken of the world is always prepared for her by religion; and science only works in the path assigned her by religion. Religion reveals the meaning of life, and science applies this meaning to the various phases of life. And, therefore, if religion give a false meaning to life, science reared, in this religious creed, will apply this false meaning to the life of man.

The teaching of the Church gave, as the basis of life, the right of man to perfect bliss—bliss which is to be attained, not by the individual efforts of man, but by something beyond his own control; and this view of human life became the basis of our European science and philosophy.

Religion, science, public opinion, all unanimously tell us that the life we lead is a bad one; but that the doctrine which teaches us to endeavour to improve, and thus make our life itself better, is *impracticable*.

The doctrine of Christ, as an improvement of human life by the rational efforts of man, is impracticable, because Adam sinned, and the world is full of evil, says religion.

Christ's doctrine is impracticable, because human life is governed by certain laws, which are independent of the will of man, says philosophy. Philosophy and science say, in other words, exactly the same as religion does in its dogmas of original sin and redemption.

In the doctrine of redemption there are two fundamental theses on which all is grounded: (1) man has a right to perfect bliss, but the life of this world is a bad one, and cannot be amended by the efforts of man; (2) we can only be saved by faith.

These two theses have become first truths, both for the believers and the unbelievers of our so-called Christian society. Out of the second thesis arose the Church, with its institutions. Out of the first arose our social opinions, and our philosophical and political theories.

All the political and philosophical theories which justify existing order, Hegelism and its offspring, are based on this thesis.

Pessimism, which expects of life what it cannot give, and therefore denies life, is but the result of the same thesis.

Materialism, with its strange enthusiastic assertion that man is but a process, is the lawful child of this teaching which acknowledges that the life here below is a fallen life.

Spiritism, with its learned partisans, is the best proof that scientific and philosophical views are not free, but are based on the principle, inculcated by religion, that a blissful eternal life is natural to man.

This erroneous idea of the meaning of life has perverted the whole activity of man. The dogma of the fall and of the redemption of man has closed the most important and lawful domain of man's activity to him, and has excluded from the whole sphere of human knowledge the knowledge of what man must do to be happier and better. Science and philosophy fancy themselves the adversaries of so-called Christianity, and pride themselves upon the fact, while they, in reality, work for it. Science and philosophy treat of everything except the one important point: How

man is to improve his condition and lead a better life. The teaching of morality, called ethics, has quite disappeared from our so-called Christian society.

Neither believers nor unbelievers ask themselves how we ought to live, and how we must use the reason which is given to us; but they ask themselves, 'Why is our life here not such as we fancied it to be, and when will it be such as we wish it to be?'

It is only through the influence of this false doctrine that we can explain how it is man has forgotten, that his whole history is but an endeavour to solve the contradictions between his rational and animal nature.

The religious and philosophical teachings of all nations (except the philosophical teachings of the so-called Christian world), Judaism, Buddhism, Brahminism, the teaching of Confucius, and of the sages of ancient Greece, have but one purpose in view—the regulation of life, and the solution of the problem, how man must strive to improve his condition and lead a better life. The teaching of Confucius deals with personal improvement; Judaism treats of man's following the covenant made with God; Buddhism teaches each how to escape the evils of life. Socrates taught personal improvement in the name of reason. The Stoics acknowledge rational liberty as the sole basis of the true life.

The rational activity of man has always lain in enlightening, by reason, his striving after good. Free will, says philosophy, is an illusion; and it prides itself on the audacity of the assertion. But free will is not only an illusion; it is a word which has really no



meaning. It is a word invented by theologians and legislators; and to try to disprove its existence is but wrestling with a windmill.

Reason, which enlightens our life and forces us to modify our actions, is not an illusion, and cannot possibly be explained away. The following after reason in order to attain happiness was a doctrine taught mankind by all true teachers, and in it lies the whole doctrine of Christ.

The doctrine of Christ concerns the son of man, and is applicable to all men, *i.e.*, it concerns the striving of all men after good; and it concerns human reason, which enlightens man in his search. (To prove that 'the Son of Man' signifies the son of man is superfluous. In order to consider the words, 'the Son of Man' as having any other meaning, it would be necessary to prove that Christ purposely used words which have another meaning to express what He wished to say. But even if, according to the positive teaching of the Church, the words, 'the Son of Man,' signify 'the Son of God,' the words, 'the Son of Man,' still signify man, for Christ calls all men 'the sons of God.')

The doctrine of Christ concerning the son of man, the Son of God, which is the basis of the whole Gospel, is expressed in the clearest manner in His conversation with Nicodemus. 'Every man,' says He, 'in addition to his consciousness of an individual life, through his human parents, must admit that His birth is from above' (John iii. 5, 6, 7). That which man acknowledges in himself as being *free*, is just what is born of the Eternal Being, of Him Whom we



call God (18, 14). This Son of God in man, born of God, is what we must exalt in ourselves in order to obtain the true life (14, 17). The son of man is of the same nature as God (not begotten of God). He, who exalts in himself the Son of God over all the rest that is in him, he who believes that life is in himself alone, will not find himself in contradiction with life. The contradiction only results from men not believing in the light which is in them (18, 21); the light of which John the Evangelist speaks when he says, 'In him is life, and the life is the light of men.'

Christ teaches us to exalt above all else the son of man, who is the Son of God and the light of men. He says: 'When you lift up the son of man, you will know that I speak not of myself' (John viii. 28). The Hebrews do not understand His words, and they ask: 'The son of man must be lifted up. Who is this son of man?' (John xii. 34). He answers thus (John xii. 35): 'Yet a little while is the light *in you*.\* Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.' On being questioned what the words: 'Lift up the son of man' signify, Christ answers: 'To live according to the light which is in man.'

The son of man, according to the answer given by Christ, is the light in which man must walk while the light is in them.

\* In all translations adopted by the Church, the passage has been purposely translated incorrectly; instead of 'in you' (*εν υμιν*) 'with you.'

Luke xi. 35 : 'Take heed that the *light* which is in thee be not darkness.'

Matt. vi. 23 : 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness?' Christ speaks thus to all men.

Both before Christ and after Him have men said the same, viz., that there lives in man a divine light, sent down from heaven, and that light is 'reason'; and each must follow that light alone, seeking for good by its aid alone. This has been said by the Brahmin teachers, by the Hebrew prophets, by Confucius, Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and by all truly wise men, who were not compilers of philosophical theories, but who sought the truth for their own good and that of all men.\*

And now, according to the dogma of the redemption, we find that it is altogether unnecessary to think or speak of that light in man. Believers say, it is necessary to consider the nature of each person of the Trinity, and which of the sacraments must be observed;

\* Marcus Aurelius says : 'Respect what is most powerful in the world—what turns all to profit and governs all. Respect what is powerful in thee likewise. It is like the first, because it profits by what is in thee and rules thy life.'

Epictetus says : 'God has sowed his seed not only in my father and grandfather, but in all beings who live on earth, particularly in rational beings, because they enter into communication with God through reason, by which they are united to him.'

In the book of Confucius it is said : 'The law of the great science lies in developing and raising the principle of the light of reason, which we have received from heaven.'

This thesis is repeated several times, and is the basis of the teaching of Confucius.

for the salvation of man will come, not of his own efforts, but through the Trinity, and by a regular observance of the sacraments. We must consider, say unbelievers, by what laws the infinitesimal particle of substance moves in the endless expanse of endless time ; but it is not necessary to consider what reason requires of man for his own good, because the improvement of his state will not proceed from his own efforts, but from the general laws which we shall discover.

I am persuaded that, in a few centuries, the history of the so-called scientific activity in Europe during these latter ages will form an inexhaustible subject of laughter and pity for still later generations, who will report somewhat in this style : ' During several centuries the learned men of the small Western part of the great hemisphere were in a state of epidemic insanity, fancying that a life of eternal bliss was to be theirs ; and were plunged in lucubrations of all kinds as to how, and according to what laws, that life was to begin for them, meanwhile doing nothing themselves, and never thinking of improving themselves.' And still more touching will this seem to the future historian when he finds that these men had a teacher who clearly and definitely explained to them what they were to do in order to be happier, but that the Teacher's words were taken by some to mean that He would come in a cloud to set all right, while others said that the words of the Teacher were perfect, but impracticable ; for human life was not such as they wished it to be, and was not worth caring about ; that human intellect was to be directed towards a study of

the laws of this life, without any reference to the good of man.

The Church says that the doctrine of Christ is impracticable, because life here is but a suggestion of the true life; it cannot be good—it is all evil. The best way to live this life is to despise it, and to live by faith, *i.e.*, by fancy, in a future life of eternal bliss. Philosophy, science, public opinion, say that the doctrine of Christ is impracticable, because the life of man does not depend on the light of reason, but on general laws; and that there is no need to enlighten life by our reason, to seek to be guided by reason, for we must live as we can, firmly believing that, according to the laws of historical and sociological progress, after we have lived badly very long, our life will grow very good *of itself*.

Men come to a farm, and find all they want there; a house with all necessary utensils, barns full of corn, cellars full of all kinds of provisions; in the yard are implements of husbandry, tools, harness, horses, cows, sheep, in a word all that is needful for living contentedly. Men crowd in and begin to use what they find, each mindful of himself alone, never thinking of leaving anything either for those who are with him in the house, or for those who are to come after him. Each wishes to have all for himself. Each hastens to take as much as he can, and a consequent destruction of everything ensues; all are struggling, fighting to possess themselves of the property; milch cows, and unshorn sheep about to kid, are killed for meat; the ovens are heated with benches and cars; the men fight for milk, for corn; and thus spill, spoil, and waste more

than they use. Not one of them can eat a morsel in peace, each is snarling at his neighbour; a stronger man comes and takes possession of all, and he is despoiled in his turn.

At last these men, all bruised and exhausted with fighting and hunger, leave the farm. The master again makes ready the farm, that men may live there in peace. Again plenty fills the yard, and again passers-by come in, and the struggling and fighting are renewed; all is wasted once more, and the worn-out, bruised, and angry men again leave the farm, abusing and hating their companions and the master too, for having so sparingly and so poorly provided for them. Once again the good master gets the farm ready, and the struggling returns over and over again. Now, one day, amongst the new comers appears a teacher who says: 'Brethren, we are all wrong. See what plenty there is here; see how carefully all is provided. There will be enough, not only for us, but for those who come after us, if we do but live wisely. Let us not despoil, but rather let us help each other. Let us sow, plough, breed cattle, and it will be well for us all. And it happened that some understood what the Teacher said, and they followed His advice; they ceased fighting and robbing each other, and they set to work. But some had not heard the Teacher's words, and others had heard, but did not believe Him, and they did not do what He enjoined, but continued to fight, as before, and, after wasting the master's property, they too left the farm. Those who obeyed the Teacher said—Do not fight, do not waste the master's property; it will be better for you if



you do not act thus. Do as our Teacher bids us. But there were many who had not heard, or would not believe, and things went on in the old way. But it is said that the time came when all in the farm heard the Teacher's words, and not only understood them, but knew that God Himself spoke to them through the Teacher; that the Teacher was God; and all believed each word the Teacher said to be a true and sacred word. Yet it is reported that even after this, instead of all living according to the words of the Teacher, it came to pass that none forbore from violence; they all fell to struggling and fighting again. 'We are sure, now,' said they, 'that it *must* be so, that it cannot be otherwise.'

What could that mean? Even beasts know in what manner to eat their food without trampling it under foot; and men who knew how to live better, who believed that God Himself had taught them how they were to live, lived worse, because, as they said, they could not live otherwise. These men must have fallen into some delusion. What could those men in the farm have imagined, to induce them to lead their former lives, despoiling each other, wasting their master's property, and ruining themselves while believing in the words of the Teacher? It was this—the Teacher had said to them, 'The life you lead here is a bad one, improve it and you shall be happy;' so they fancied that the Teacher condemned their life in the farm, and promised them another and better life, in some other place, and *not in that farm*. Whereupon they concluded that the farm was but an inn, and that it was not worth while trying to live well in it; and that the only thing



necessary was to endeavour not to lose the good life promised them elsewhere. It is only thus that the strange conduct can be explained; for both those who believed that the Teacher was God, and those who acknowledged him to be a clever man and His words to be just, continued to live contrary to His instructions.

If men would but keep from ruining their own lives, and expecting someone from outside to come and help them—either Christ on the clouds, with the flourish of trumpets, or some historical law, or the law of the differentiation and integration of power! No one will help them, if they do not help themselves. And that is easily done. Let them expect nothing either from heaven or earth, and simply cease from ruining their own lives.

### VIII.

GRANTING, then, that the doctrine of Christ gives bliss to the world; granting that it is rational; and that man, as a rational being, has no right to renounce it; what can one man do alone, amidst a world of men who do not fulfil the law of Christ? If all would agree to practise the doctrine of Christ, its fulfilment would be possible; but what can the efforts of one man avail, if the whole world be against him? How often do we hear it said: 'If, amidst a whole world of men who do not fulfil the doctrine of Christ, I alone begin to follow it, by giving up what I love, by letting my cheek be smitten, or even by refusing to take an oath, or to have any part in war, I shall be robbed, and, if I do not starve, I shall be either beaten

to death, or imprisoned, or shot ; and I shall have destroyed the happiness of my whole life, and even my life itself, in vain.'

We often hear men argue thus, and I said the same myself, until I had entirely set aside the influence of Church teaching, which had prevented my taking in the full meaning of Christ's doctrine about life.

Christ gives His doctrine as the means of salvation from the corrupt life which those who do not follow His teaching lead, and yet I say that I should like to follow it, but cannot make up my mind to ruin my life! It would seem, then, that I do not consider my life as corrupt, but as something real and good, and something which is my own. It is just in the conviction that this earthly, individual life is something real, and something which actually belongs to us, that the misunderstanding lies, which prevents our comprehending the doctrine of Christ. Christ knows the delusion by which men consider their own individual lives as something real, and something to which they have a personal right ; and He shows them, in a series of sermons and parables, that they have no claims on life, that they have, indeed, no life at all, until they attain true life, by renouncing the shadow which they call their life.

In order to understand Christ's doctrine of salvation, we must, first of all, comprehend what the prophets Solomon, Budda, and all the sages of the world have said concerning the individual life of man. We may, as Pascal says, live on without thinking of all this, holding a screen before our eyes, which hides from us the abyss of death, towards which we are all

hastening ; but we need only reflect upon what the individual life of man is, to be convinced that his entire life, if it be only the individual life, is of no importance for each separate man.

In order to understand the doctrine of Christ, we must first of all bethink ourselves, repent, so that in us may be fulfilled the *μετάνοια*, which the precursor of Christ, John the Baptist, speaks of when preaching to men who, like ourselves, had gone astray. He says first of all, 'Repent ye,' *i.e.*, bethink yourselves, 'otherwise ye shall all perish.' He says, 'The axe is already laid to the root of the tree to hew it down. Death and destruction are close at hand. Remember this, and alter your lives.' Christ begins His preaching with the same words, 'Repent, or ye shall all perish.'

Luke xiii. 1-5 : Christ hears of the destruction of the Galileans, killed by Pilate, and He says : (2) 'Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered thus ? (3) I tell ye, Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (4) Or think you that those eighteen men, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, were sinners above all men that lived in Jerusalem ? (5) I tell you, Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'

If Christ lived in our days, in Russia, He would have said—'Suppose ye, that those who were burnt in the circus at Berditche, or who perished on the embankment near Koukouevo,\* were sinners above all others ? Ye shall likewise perish if ye do not repent,

\* A town in the south of Russia where a dreadful railway catastrophe took place in 1883.

if ye do not find that which is imperishable. The death of those who were crushed by the tower, who were burnt in the circus, fills you with awe, but death, awful and inevitable, awaits you too. And you endeavour in vain to forget it. If it come upon you unawares, it will be more awful still.'

He says (Luke xii. 54—57), 'When ye see a cloud rise out of the west ; straightway ye say there cometh a shower ; and so it is. (55) 'And when the south wind blow, ye say there will be heat, and so it is. (56) 'Hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time?' (57) 'Why even of yourselves judge ye not what must be?'

'You can judge, according to various signs, of what the weather will be, how is it then, that you cannot see what awaits you yourselves? You may try to escape peril ; you may take the greatest care of your life, and still, if Pilate do not kill you, the tower will crush you, and if neither Pilate nor the tower destroy you, you will die in your bed in worse tortures.'

'Make a simple calculation, as worldly men do when they begin any business, as, for instance, erecting a tower, going to war, or building a factory. They work with some rational end in view. (Luke xiv. 28—31). 'For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? (29) 'Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold begin to mock him, (30) 'Saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish. (31) 'Or, what king going to make

war against another king sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand ?'

'Is it not senseless to work at what will never be finished, however hard thou mayest try ! Death will always come before thou hast built up the tower of thine earthly happiness. And if thou knowest beforehand that however thou mayest struggle against death, it will conquer thee, would it not be better, instead of struggling against it, not to put thy whole soul into what shall surely perish, but to seek some work, which cannot be destroyed by inevitable death ?'

Luke xii. 22—27 : 'And He said unto His disciples : therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. (23) The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. (24) Consider the ravens ; for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them ; how much more are ye better than they ? (25) And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature even one cubit ? (26) If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest ? (27) Consider the lilies, how they grow ; they toil not, they spin not ; and yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.'

However much a man may care about body and food, he cannot add one hour to his life.\* Then is it

\* These words have been incorrectly translated : the word *ήλικια* means age, time of life ; therefore the expression signifies : 'ye cannot add one hour to your life.'



not foolish to trouble oneself about things that cannot be done?

While knowing that the end is death, you care only to assure your lives by gaining wealth. Life cannot be assured by wealth. Why will you not comprehend that you but delude yourselves with a ridiculous deception?

The purport of life, Christ says, does not lie in what we possess, and in what we gain, what is *not ourselves*; it must lie in something else than that. He says (Luke xii.) That the life of man, in spite of all his riches, does not depend upon his property. '(16) The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; (17) and he thought within himself, What shall I do? I have no room where to bestow my fruits. (18) And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my corn and all my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? (21) So it is with him who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.'

Death stands every moment over you. 'Therefore (Luke xii. 35, 36, 38, 39, 40) 'let your loins be girded about, and your lights shining; (36) and ye yourselves be like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. (38) And if he shall come in the



second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (39) And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. (40) Be ye therefore ready also ; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'

The parable of the virgins awaiting the bridegroom, of the end of the age, and of the last judgment, all refer, according to the opinion of interpreters, not merely to the end of the world, but also to the peril in which every man hourly stands.

Death, death, death, attends us every second. Our lives are passed in the presence of death. While working individually for your future, you well know that the future will give you nought but death. And death will destroy all you worked for. Thus, it is clear that *life for oneself* can never have any meaning. If there be a rational life, it must be some other kind of life ; it must be one, the purpose of which does not consist in securing one's own future. To live rationally, we must live so that death cannot destroy our life.

Luke x. 41 : 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful.'

All the innumerable affairs that we transact for ourselves will be of no use to us in the future ; all such things are but the illusion with which we deceive ourselves. 'But one thing is needful.'

The state of man from the day of his birth is such, that inevitable destruction awaits him, that is, a

senseless life and a senseless death, if he do not find what alone is necessary for the true life. Christ reveals to men that which alone gives them the true life. He does not invent it, He does not promise to give it by His divine power ; He only shows mankind that, besides the individual life, which is but a deception, there must be another life, which is truth, and no deception.

Christ, in his parable of the vine-dresser (Matt. xxi. 33-42), explains the source of human error, which hides the truth from men, and which makes them consider the shadow of life, their own individual life, as the true one.

Certain men, living in their master's cultivated garden, fancied themselves the owners of that garden ; and that error leads to a series of irrational and cruel actions on the part of these men, ending in their banishment, their exclusion from that life in the garden. So likewise do we fancy that the life of each of us is his own, that we have a right to it, and that we can do as we like with it, without being responsible to any one. We cannot, therefore, avoid the same series of senseless and cruel actions and misfortunes, or escape the same exclusion from the life we misuse. As the vine-dressers fancied that the more cruel they were the better they would assure their own prosperity, by killing the servants and the master's son, so do we fancy that the more cruel we are the more independent we shall become.

As it was with the vine-dressers, who, after refusing others the fruits of the garden, were driven out themselves by their master, so is it with men, who fancy

that life for self is the true life. Death expels them, and others take their place ; not as a punishment, but merely because those men did not understand life. As the men in the garden either forgot, or would not admit, that the garden had been only entrusted to their care, that it was already cultivated and fenced around, and somebody had previously been working in it for them, and therefore expected them to work too, for the sake of others ; so do men, while living for themselves, forget, or fail to recognise, all that had been done by others before their birth, and all that is done during their lifetime ; and that, therefore, something is expected of them too ; they choose to forget that all the blessings of life, which they enjoy, were entrusted and are entrusted to them, and must, therefore, either be transferred or given up.

This improved view of life, this *μετάνοια*, is the corner-stone of the doctrine of Christ, as He says at the end of the parable. According to Christ's doctrine, the vine-dressers, who lived in the vineyard which they had not cultivated themselves, should have known and felt that they were deeply indebted to the master ; and so should men likewise understand and feel that, from the day of their birth to the day of their death, they owe a heavy debt to those who lived before them, to those who still live, and to those who are to live after them. They should understand that every hour of the life they continue to live that debt grows heavier ; and that, therefore, the man who lives for himself, and does not acknowledge the obligation which binds him to life and to the principle of life, deprives himself of life : he should understand that

by living thus he destroys his life, while desirous of saving it.

The true life is but a continuation of past life, and works for the good of the present life, as well as for that of the future.

To be a sharer of that life man must renounce his own will, and fulfil the will of the Father of life, who gave it to the son of man.

John viii. 35 : 'The servant who does his own will, and not that of his master, does not abide for ever in the house of his master ; only the son, who fulfils the will of the father, abideth ever,' Christ says, expressing the same idea in another sense.

The will of the Father of life is not the life of individual man, but of the 'son of man,' that lives in men ; and therefore a man keeps his life only when he considers it as a trust given to him by the Father, in order to serve unto the good of all ; and he really lives, when he lives not for himself, but for the 'son of man.'

Matt. xxv. 14-46 : A householder gave each of his servants a share of his property, and left them, without any instructions. Some of the servants, though they had not received any orders from their master concerning the way in which they were to use their share of the master's property, understood that it was not theirs, but his, and that the property was to grow ; they, therefore, worked for the master. And the servants who had worked for the master became shareholders of the master's business ; while those who had not worked were deprived of what had been given them.

The life of the son of man is given to all men, and they are not told *why* it is given them. Some understand that life is not their own, but is a trust, and that *it must serve the life of the 'son of man.'* Others, under the pretext that they do not understand the purport of life, do not live up to that high aim. Those who do, are united to the source of life; and those who do not, are deprived of life. And, from the verses 31 to 46, Christ tells us what is meant by serving the 'son of man,' and in what the reward of that service consists.

The son of man, according to the words of Christ, will say (v. 34) as the king did, 'Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; ye clothed, visited, and comforted me;' for I am the same in you, and in the least of those whom you took pity on, and to whom you have done good. You lived, not for yourselves, but for the 'son of man,' and therefore shall ye have eternal life.

Christ speaks only of *that* eternal life throughout the Gospel. And strange as it may seem to say so of Christ, who Himself rose from the dead, and who promised to raise all men, He never, by a single word, confirmed the belief in individual resurrection, in individual immortality beyond the grave, but He even attached to the raising up of the dead in the kingdom of the Messiah, as taught by the Pharisees, a meaning which excluded the idea of individual resurrection.

The Sadducees disputed the raising up of the dead. The Pharisees acknowledged it, as all true believers amongst the Jews still do. The raising up of the



dead (not the resurrection, as the word has been erroneously translated) will, according to the Jewish belief, be accomplished at the coming of the Messiah, and the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth. And Christ, on meeting with this belief in a temporary, local, and carnal resurrection, rejects it, and sets in its place His doctrine of the restoration to eternal life in God.

When the Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection, and supposed that Christ agreed in opinion with the Pharisees, asked Him, 'Whose wife shall she be, of the seven?' He gives a clear and definite answer to both questions.

He says (Matt. xxii. 29-32, Mark xii. 24-27, Luke xx. 34-38), 'You do err, not knowing the Scripture nor the power of God.' And in refutation of the belief of the Pharisees, He says, 'The raising up of the dead is neither carnal nor individual. Those who are raised from the dead, become the sons of God, and live like angels (the powers of God) in heaven (with God), and there can no question for them whose wife she will be, because, being one with God, they lose all individuality.' Concerning the raising up of the dead, He continues, in reply to the Sadducees, who acknowledged only an earthly life, and nothing but an earthly carnal life, 'Have you not read what God said unto you? The Scripture saith, that God said to Moses, from the bush, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. If God said to Moses that He was the God of Jacob, then Jacob is not dead; for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. *With God all are living.*



And therefore, if there be a living God, the man who is one with God lives too.'

In reply to the Pharisees, Christ says that the raising from the dead cannot be carnal and individual. In reply to the Sadducees, He says that, besides an individual and temporary life, there is another life in communion with God.

Denying individual and carnal resurrection, Christ asserts that the raising from the dead lies in the transfusion of man's life into God. Christ preaches salvation from individual life, and sets that salvation in the exaltation of the son of man and a life in God. Connecting His doctrine with that of the Hebrews, as far as concerns the coming of the Messiah, He speaks to them of the raising up of the son of man from the dead, thereby meaning, not a personal carnal rising from the dead, but an awakening to life in God. Of individual carnal resurrection He never speaks. The best proof that Christ never preached the resurrection of men from the dead is found in the very two texts quoted by theologians in confirmation of His doctrine of resurrection. These two texts are the following:—Matt. xxv. 31-46, and John v. 28, 29. In the first He speaks of the coming, that is, the raising up, the exaltation, of the son of man (we find the same in Matt. x. 23), and the greatness and power of the son of man are likened to those of a king. In the second text, Christ speaks of the raising up of true life here on earth, as expressed in the 24th verse.

It needs but a closer consideration of the meaning of Christ's doctrine of eternal life in God; it needs but to re-establish in our minds the teaching of the

Hebrew prophets, to enable us to comprehend that if Christ had wished to preach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which, at that time was being embodied in the Talmud, and was a subject of dispute, He would have done so, clearly and definitely ; yet, on the contrary, He not only forbore preaching that doctrine, but even refuted it ; nor do we find a single passage in the Gospel to confirm it. The two above-mentioned texts have a very different meaning.

Strange as the assertion may seem to those that have not studied the Gospel, *never, in a single passage, does Christ speak of His own personal resurrection.* If, as theologians maintain, the basis of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Christ, the least we could expect would be that Christ, knowing He would rise from the dead, and that upon His rising the chief dogma of the faith would be founded, should at least once have said so, clearly and definitely. Yet He never does ; nor do we find any mention made of His resurrection throughout the whole canonical Gospel. The doctrine taught is the exaltation of the 'son of man,' or, in other words, of the substance of life in man ; and this is to acknowledge one's self to be the son of God. In Himself, Christ personifies man, who acknowledges himself to be the son of God. Matt. xvi. 13-20. He asks the disciples what men say of Him, *the son of man.* The disciples answer, that some think Him to be John, miraculously raised from the dead ; some think Him a prophet ; some Elias, come down from heaven. 'And what think ye of me ?' He asks. And Peter, thinking of Christ as he himself did, answers, 'Thou art Messiah, the son of the living

God.' And Christ says, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but our Father which is in heaven,' or, 'Thou hast understood, not because thou hast believed the words of men, but because, knowing thyself to be the son of God, thou hast understood me.' And having explained to Peter that true faith lies in our knowing ourselves to be the sons of God, Christ says to the other disciples (v. 20) that they should, in future, tell no man that He, Jesus, is the Messiah. And then Christ says, that though He will be put to torture and death, the son of man, knowing Himself to be the son of God, will be raised up, and will triumph over all. And yet these words are interpreted as foretelling His resurrection.

John ii. 19-22, Matt. xii. 40, Luke xi. 20, Matt. xvi. 21, Matt. xvi. 4, Mark viii. 31, Luke ix. 22, Matt. xvii. 23, Mark ix. 31, Matt. xx. 19, Mark x. 34, Luke xviii. 33, Matt. xxvi. 32, Mark xiv. 48. These fourteen texts are all supposed to prove that Christ foretold His resurrection. In three of these texts He speaks of Jonas in the belly of the whale; and in one, of the raising of the temple. In the other ten texts, Christ says that the son of man cannot be destroyed for ever; but nowhere do we find one word concerning His resurrection.

Indeed, in the original, the word '*resurrection*' does not occur in any one of these texts. Give a man, unacquainted with theological interpretation, but with some knowledge of Greek, these texts to translate, and he will never render their meaning in the way our translators of the Gospel have done. There are, in the original, two different words in these

texts: the one is ἀνίστημι, the other is ἐγείρω. One of these words signifies 'to raise;' the other signifies 'to rouse or waken,' or it might be to awaken, to rise. But neither of them can possibly mean 'rise from the dead.' In order to be quite sure that these Greek words, and the Hebrew equivalent 'cōum,' cannot signify 'to rise from the dead,' it will suffice to compare the texts in which these words are used; for they very often occur, but never in the sense of 'rise from the dead.'

The word 'resuscitate,' 'auferstehen,' 'réssusciter,' does not exist either in the Greek or in the Hebrew languages, any more than did the idea itself, which the word implies. In order to express the idea of resurrection in Greek or in Hebrew, a periphrasis must be made use of—either 'he rose from the dead,' or 'he awoke from the dead.' It is thus in Matt. xiv. 2, where we read that Herod supposed that John the Baptist had risen from the dead; the expression is, 'woke up from the dead.' We find the same in the Gospel according to St. Luke xvi. 31, in the parable of Lazarus. Christ says, that even if a man rose from the dead they would not believe him. We again find, in this text, the words 'risen from the dead.' In the texts where the words 'to rise' or to 'wake up,' are used without the addition of the words '*from the dead*,' they never did signify, and never can be supposed to signify, 'resurrection.' When Christ speaks of Himself in the above-mentioned passages, which are considered as proofs that He foretold His resurrection, He never once subjoins the words, 'from the dead.'

Our idea of resurrection is so far from the Hebrews' ideas of life, that we cannot even imagine Christ could have spoken to them of resurrection and of an eternal, individual life common to all men. The idea of a future individual life has not been transmitted to us, either through the teaching of the Hebrews or through the doctrine of Christ. It made its way into the teaching of the Church from a very different source. Strange as it may sound, it must be confessed that a belief in a future individual life is the lowest and grossest conception, based only on a confusion of sleep with death, which is common to all barbarous nations. The teaching of the Hebrews, however, stood immeasurably higher than that conception.

We feel so convinced that this superstition is a very exalted one, that we very seriously allege, as a proof of the superiority of our doctrine over all others, the fact that *we* uphold that superstition, while others, as for instance, the Chinese and the Hindoos, do not. This is maintained, not only by theologians, but by free-thinking learned historians of religion, such as Tille, Max Müller, and others. Classifying the various religions, they assert that the religions which keep to that superstition are superior to those which do not. The freethinker, Schopenhauer, calls the Hebrew religion the most contemptible (*niederträchtigste*) of all, because it contains no idea (*keine idee*) of the immortality of the soul. And, indeed, in the Hebrew religion, neither the meaning nor the word expressive of it exists. Eternal life in the Hebrew language is '*haicoïlom*.' The word '*oïlom*' signifies, 'endless, immutable.' '*Oïlom*' likewise signifies 'world'—cosmos.



Life in general, and especially eternal life, *haieoïlom*, is, according to the Hebrews, proper to God alone. God is the God of life—the living God. Man, according to the Hebrew belief, is always mortal. God alone lives for ever. In the five books of Moses we find the words ‘eternal life’ used twice. Once in Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, 40, God says, ‘See now that I am I, and there is no other God but Me. I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can be delivered from Me. I lift up my hand to heaven and say, *I live for ever.*’ In the book of Genesis iii. 22, God says, ‘Behold the man hath eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and hath become as one of us ; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and *live for ever.*’ These are the only two cases in which the words ‘eternal life’ are used in the Old Testament—excepting one chapter of the apocryphal gospel of Daniel—and they clearly define the idea the Hebrews had both of life in general and of eternal life. Life itself, according to the Jewish belief, is eternal, and it is such in God ; man is always mortal—such is his nature.

The Old Testament does not *tell* us, as our Bible histories do, that God breathed an *immortal soul* into man, nor that the first man was immortal until he sinned. According to the Book of Genesis (i. 26), God created man, as He did all other living creatures, male and female, and commanded them to increase and multiply. God spoke of man just as he spoke of beast. In the second chapter it is said that man learned to ‘know good and evil.’ But we are told



too, that God 'drove man out of Eden, and barred his way to the tree of life.' Thus man did not eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and thus he did not attain the *haieoïlom*, *i.e.*, eternal life, but remained mortal.

According to the Jewish doctrine, man is mortal. Life for him is but a life which continues in the people, from generation to generation. Only the people, according to the Jewish doctrine, can live. When God says you shall live and not die, he speaks to the people. The life breathed by God into man is but a mortal life for each individually, but it continues from generation to generation if men fulfil their covenant with God, if they keep the conditions laid down by God.

After expounding the laws, and declaring that these laws were not in heaven, but in their own hearts, Moses says (Deut. xxx. 15), 'See, I now set before you life and good, death and evil, exhorting you to love God and to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, that ye may live.' And verse 19: 'I call heaven and earth to record against you that I have set before you *life and death*, blessing and cursing; choose life, that thou and thy seed may live, loving God, obeying Him and cleaving to Him; for He is thy life and the length of thy days.'

The principal difference between *our* idea of human life and that of the Hebrews is that, according to us, our mortal life—which passes on from generation to generation—is not the true life, but a fallen one, a temporary corrupt life; while, according to the Hebrews this life is the true one, it is the highest blessing given man, and given him on the condition that he fulfils the will of God. From *our* point of view, the

transition of that *fallen life* from generation to generation is the continuation of the curse. From the *Hebrew* point of view it is the highest blessing man can attain, and he attains it by fulfilling the will of God.

It is on this idea of life that Christ bases his doctrine concerning the true or eternal life, which He opposes to mortal, individual life. 'Search the Scriptures,' Christ says to the Hebrews (John v. 39), 'for in them ye think ye have eternal life.'

A young man asks Christ (Matt. xix.) what he should do to have eternal life. In answer to his question Christ says, 'If thou wilt enter into *life*' (He does not say life eternal, but '*life*'), 'keep the commandments.' He says the same to the lawyers, 'This do, and thou shalt live' (Luke x. 28); and again He says 'live' without adding 'eternally.' In both these cases Christ defines what each man should understand by the words 'eternal life.' In using these words He says to the Hebrews what is more than once said in their law, viz., that fulfilling the will of God is eternal life.

Christ opposes to a temporary, personal, individual life the eternal life, which, according to Deuteronomy, God promised to Israel, with the only difference that, according to the Hebrews, eternal life was to continue only amongst the chosen people of Israel, and that it was necessary, in order to attain that life, to keep the laws given by God exclusively to Israel; but, according to the doctrine of Christ, eternal life continues in the son of man, and, in order to keep it, it is necessary to fulfil the laws of Christ, which teach what the will of God is for all mankind.

It is not a life beyond the grave that Christ opposes

to individual life, but a life bound up with the present past, and future of all mankind—the life of the ‘son of man.’

Individual life was redeemed from perdition, according to the Hebrews, only by fulfilling the will of God, expressed in the commandments given by God to Moses. It was only thus that life was not destroyed, but was to pass from generation to generation, among the chosen people of God. Individual life is saved from perdition, according to the doctrine of Christ, likewise by fulfilling the will of God, expressed in the commandments of Christ. It is only thus that individual life does not perish, but becomes eternal in the son of man. The only difference between the two doctrines is that, according to Moses, serving God meant the serving Him of but one people; whereas, according to Christ, the serving of God the Father means the serving of God by all mankind. Life could hardly continue through long generations amongst one people; for the nation itself might disappear off the face of the earth, and its continuation would depend upon the increase or diminution of posterity. But endless life, according to the doctrine of Christ, is sure, for it is transferred into the son of man living up to the will of the Father.

Let us suppose that Christ’s words concerning the day of judgment and the end of the world, as well as the words we read in the Gospel of St. John, do promise a life beyond the grave for the souls of the dead, yet there can be no doubt that His doctrine of the light of life, of the kingdom of God, has a meaning as intelligible to us as it was to his hearers; *i.e.*, that

true life is but the life of the son of man, according to the will of the Father. This can be the more easily admitted, as the doctrine concerning true life, according to the will of the Father of Life, includes the idea of immortality and a life beyond the grave. It would perhaps be more just to infer that man after a life passed in following his own will in this world will enjoy an eternal individual life of bliss in paradise, that would perhaps be more just, but to think thus, to believe in eternal bliss awaiting me as a reward for the good I have done, and eternal torment as the punishment of my evil deeds, does not lead to a clear comprehension of Christ's doctrine. To think thus is on the contrary to do away with the ground-work of Christ's doctrine.

The whole purport of Christ's doctrine is to teach His disciples that individual life being but a delusion they should renounce it, and transfer their individual lives into the life of all humanity, into the life of the son of man. The doctrine of the immortality of each soul does not require of us to renounce our lives, but, on the contrary, confirms their individuality for ever.

According to the ideas of the Hebrews, the Chinese, the Hindoos, and of all those who do not believe in the dogmas of the fall of man and the redemption, the life we have *is life*. Man lives, has children, educates them, grows old, and dies. His children grow up and continue his life, which goes on without intermission from generation to generation, existing just as all else in the world exists—stones, metals, plants, beasts, and all else. Life is life, and we must make the most of it. To live for self alone is irrational.

And, therefore, since man has first existed on the earth, each one seeks some aim in life beyond his own individual life : he lives for his children, his family, his nation, for humanity, for all that does not die with his individual life.

Now, according to the teaching of our Church, life, the greatest blessing known to us, is only a part of that life which is kept from us for a time. According to the Church, our life is not the life God wished to give us, not the life God ought to have given us ; but a corrupt, bad, fallen life, only an imperfect specimen of what life should be.

The chief problem of life, according to this thesis, does not consist in leading the mortal life which is given us, as the giver of it wishes us to do ; not in our considering it eternal from generation to generation, as the Hebrews do ; nor in uniting it to the will of the Father, as Christ taught us to do, but in persuading ourselves that after this life the true life will begin.

Christ says nothing of that imaginary life. The theories of the fall of Adam, of eternal life in paradise, and of the immortal soul breathed by God into Adam, were unknown to Christ, and therefore He does not mention them, nor even allude to them.

Christ speaks of the life that is, and that always will be. We speak of an imaginary life, which never did exist. Then how are we to understand the doctrine of Christ ?

Christ could never have supposed so strange an idea among His followers. He supposes all men to understand that individual life must inevitably perish ; and He reveals a life which cannot perish.



Christ comforts those who are in trouble ; but His doctrine can give nothing to those who are convinced that they have more than Christ can give.

Suppose I were to exhort a man to work, assuring him that he would thereby earn food and clothing, and that man were suddenly to discover he was already a millionaire, is it not obvious that he would not heed my words.

It is thus with the doctrine of Christ. Why should I work, when I can be rich without doing so? What profit shall I have of living up to the Commandments of God, when I am convinced that, whether I do or not, I shall live for ever, individually.

We are taught that Christ-God, the second person of the Trinity, saved mankind by being incarnate, and by taking upon Himself the sin of Adam and of all mankind ; that He redeemed man from sin and the wrath of the first person of the Trinity, and that He instituted the Church and the sacraments for our salvation ; that we have but to believe this to be saved, and to attain an eternal, individual life beyond the grave. But we cannot deny that Christ likewise saved men by warning them of their inevitable destruction, and still saves them by the same ; and that His words — *'I am the way, the life, and the truth'* — point out to us the true path of life, instead of the wrong path of individual life which we trod before.

There may be men who doubt the existence of life beyond the grave, and of salvation being based on redemption, but no one can doubt the salvation of all men in general, and of each individually, through their being warned of the inevitable destruction



brought on by individual life, and through being shown that the true way to salvation lies in the fusion of their will with the will of the Father. Let any rational being ask himself what are life and death as applied to himself personally. Let him try to attach any other meaning to life and death than that which Christ pointed out.

Every idea of individual life, if it be not based on the renouncing of self for the service of man, of mankind, of the son of man, is an illusion that vanishes at the first touch of reason. I cannot doubt that, though my individual life be perishable, the life of the world according to the will of the Father can never be destroyed; and that a fusion with it alone makes salvation possible for me. But that is so little, compared to the elevated religious faith in a future life! Little, I grant, but it is sure. I lose my way in a snowdrift. A man assures me that he sees lights in the distance; that there is a village near by. He thinks he sees the lights, and so do I; but it only seems to us that we see them because we desire to see them, for we tried to reach these same lights before, and could not find them. One of us walks on through the snow, and in a short time comes out on to the road and cries, 'Do not go on, the lights you see are but in your fancy; you will lose your way and perish! I stand on firm ground, follow me, this road will lead us out!'

That is but little. While believing in the lights which glimmered before our dazzled eyes, we saw ourselves in fancy already in the village, in a warm hut, in safety and at rest, while here there was but firm ground. Yes; but if we follow the man who

spoke first we shall inevitably freeze to death ; if we mind the second, we shall reach the good road.

And what shall I do, if I alone have understood the doctrine of Christ and believe in it, among all those who do not understand and will not fulfil it?

What shall I do? Shall I live as all do, or live according to Christ's doctrine? I understand His commandments, and I see that the fulfilling of them will lead me, and all men, to perfect happiness. I understand that it is the will of the Author of all things, the will of Him from whom I have life, that these commandments should be fulfilled.

I understand that, whatever I may do, I shall inevitably perish, as will all those around me, after a senseless life and death, if I do not fulfil the will of the Father ; and that the only possibility of salvation lies in fulfilling it.

By acting as others do, I act against the good of all men, I act contrary to the will of the Father of life, and I deprive myself of the only possibility of bettering my hopeless state. By doing what Christ teaches me I shall ensure the good of all men ; of those who live at present, and of those who are to live after me. I do what He that gave me life desires me to do. I do what can alone save me.

The circus in Berditcheff is on fire. All crowd towards the door, crushing each other in their efforts to open the door, which opens inwards. A saviour comes and says to them, ' Move further from the door, turn back ; the closer you all stand to the door, the less hope of safety there is for you. If you turn back you will find an issue, and you will be saved !'

Whether I alone hear the words and believe, matters but little ; but having heard and believed, can I do otherwise than turn back and call upon the others to follow the voice of him who comes to save them? I shall, perhaps, be smothered, crushed, killed ; but the sole hope of safety is in my going towards the only issue. A saviour must be a saviour indeed, *i.e.*, must save. And the salvation of Christ is salvation indeed. He appeared, spoke, and mankind is saved.

The circus burnt a whole hour ; and it was necessary to make haste, else all could not have been saved. But the world has been burning eighteen hundred years ; burning from the time Christ said, ' I come to send fire on the earth ; and how do I languish, till it be kindled.' And it will burn till men be saved. Was not man created, and does not the fire burn, only that the happiness of man might be saved from it ?

I know there is no other door, either for myself or for those who suffer with me in this life. I know that neither I nor those around me can be saved, except by fulfilling the commandments of Christ, which give the highest bliss to all mankind.

I may have more to suffer : I may die earlier, through fulfilling Christ's doctrine. I fear neither suffering nor death. He who does not see how senseless and perishable his individual life is, he who thinks that he will not die, may fear. But, knowing that life for individual happiness alone is foolish to the highest degree, and that the end of that foolish life will be but a foolish death, I cannot fear it. I shall die, as all do, as those who do not fulfil Christ's doctrine do ; yet my life and death will have some meaning

for myself and for all. My life and death will minister to the salvation and lives of all men ; and *that* is what Christ taught us.

## IX.

WERE all to fulfil Christ's doctrine, the kingdom of God will be on earth. If I fulfil it, I do what is best for all mankind and for myself. I should be helping on the coming of that kingdom.

But where shall I find the faith that will enable me to obey Christ's teaching, to practise it, and never to swerve from it? 'I believe, Lord ; help Thou my unbelief.'

The Apostles begged Christ to confirm their faith. 'I desire to do good, yet I do evil,' says Paul the Apostle.

'It is hard to be saved ;' this is what each says and thinks.

A drowning man calls for help. A rope is thrown him. It could save him ; but the drowning man cries, 'Confirm my belief that this rope can save me.' 'I believe,' says the man, 'that it can save me ; but help my unbelief.'

What does that mean? If a man does not take hold of what alone can save him, does it not prove that he is unaware of the danger he is in?

How can a Christian who professes to believe in the divinity of Christ and of His doctrine say that he would believe if he could? God Himself, when on earth, said, 'Ye are on the eve of eternal torment, fire, of complete, eternal darkness. I bring you salvation ; do as I tell you, and ye shall be saved.'

Can a Christian reject the salvation offered him—remain unmindful of his Saviour's words, and say, 'Help my unbelief'?

If a man spoke thus, would it not seem as if he not only refused to believe that destruction awaited him, but was convinced he should not perish?

Some children have leaped overboard into the water. They are, for a time, upheld by the current, before their clothes are entirely soaked through. They swim about, unconscious of danger. A rope is thrown them from the ship. They are entreated by those on board to take hold of the rope. (We find the same meaning in the parables of the woman who had found a farthing; of the shepherd who found the sheep that was lost; in the parables of the supper and of the prodigal son.) But the children will not believe; not because they think the rope is an unsafe one, but because they do not believe that they are about to perish. Thoughtless children, like themselves, have told them that they will go on bathing merrily, even when the ship sails away. The children do not believe that the time is near when their clothes will be wet through, their little arms tired out; when they will begin to lose breath, and that then they will choke and drown. They do not believe that, and therefore they do not believe in the rope of salvation.

Men are like the children who have jumped overboard, and are sure they will not perish, therefore do not take hold of the rope. They believe in the immortality of the soul, are convinced that they will not perish, and therefore they do not fulfil the doctrine of Christ-God. They do not believe in what is



indubitable, only because they believe in what is beyond all possibility of belief.

And they cry, 'Confirm our belief that we are not perishing,'

But that is impossible. For them to believe they will be saved, they must cease to do what brings destruction, and begin to do what will save them; they must take hold of the rope of salvation. But they do not choose to do this; they wish to be assured that they are not perishing, though their companions perish, one after the other, before their eyes. And that desire to grow sure of what is not they call 'faith.' No wonder, then, that they have little faith, and that they long for more.

It was only when I understood Christ's doctrine that I saw that what such men call 'faith' is not faith: it is but that false faith which the apostle James opposes in his Epistle. That Epistle was not accepted by the Church for a long time; and when it was, it underwent several changes. Some words were removed, others transposed or incorrectly translated. I here give the accepted translation, only correcting what is inexact, according to Tischendorf's text:

James ii. 14: 'What does it profit, my brethren, if a man *suppose* that he hath faith, and have not works? Faith cannot save him. (15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, (16) and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou



hast faith, and I have works : show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God ; thou doest well : the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead ? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ? (22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ? (23) . . . (24) You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone. (25) . . . (26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.'

The apostle says that the only proof of faith is in the works which proceed from it ; and that faith from which no works proceed is but a word, with which we can neither feed any, nor justify ourselves and be saved. And therefore the faith which is not accompanied by works is not faith : it is only a wish to believe ; it is only a mistaken assertion that I believe when I do not really believe.

According to this definition, faith must be allied to works, and works make faith perfect, *i.e.*, true.

The Jews said to Christ (Mark xv. 32, Matt. xxvii. 42, John vi. 30), 'What sign wilt thou give us, that we may see and believe thee ? What dost thou ?'

The same was said to Him when He was on the Cross : 'Let Him descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe ' (Mark xv. 32).

Matt. xxvii. 42 : 'He saved others, but Himself He cannot save ! If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him.'

In answer to their prayer that He may 'increase their faith,' Christ says that the wish is vain; that they cannot be forced to believe (Luke xxii. 67). He says, 'If I tell you, you will not believe' (John x. 25, 26). 'I told you, and ye believed not.' (26) 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.'

The Jews require some outward token to enforce their belief in the doctrine of Christ, just as the Christian followers of the Church do now. And He answers that it cannot be given them, and explains why it is impossible to do so. He says that they cannot believe, because they are not of His sheep, or, they do not follow the path of life which He points out to His flock. He explains (John v. 44) wherein lies the difference between His sheep and those who are not of His flock. He explains the reason why some believe and others do not, and tells them what the basis of faith is. 'How can you believe,' He says, 'when you accept each other's δόξα,\* teaching, and do not seek the teaching which comes from God alone?'

In order to believe, Christ says, we must seek the doctrine which comes from God. 'He that speaketh from himself, seeketh his own doctrine (δόξαν τῆν ἰδίαν); but he that seeketh the doctrine of Him who sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him' (John vii. 18).

The doctrine of life, δόξα, is the basis of faith.

All our actions proceed from faith. Faith pro-

\* δόξα has been incorrectly translated by the word 'honour'; δόξα comes from δαχέω, and signifies opinion, teaching.

ceeds from the *δόξα* of the light in which we consider life. There may be innumerable deeds, numerous beliefs ; but there are only two doctrines of life (*δόξα*): Christ rejects one of them, and acknowledges the other. The one which Christ rejects is that of the existence of individual life, as belonging to man. It is the doctrine which was then, and is still, maintained by the majority of men, and from which proceed all the various beliefs of men, and all their deeds.

The other doctrine is the one taught by Christ and the prophets, viz., that our individual life has a purport only when we fulfil the will of God.

If a man has the *δόξα* that his individuality is of more moment than all else, he will consider his individual happiness as the chief and most desirable object in life ; and according as he finds that happiness in the purchase of landed property, in fame, in glory, or in the satisfaction of his lusts, his faith will coincide with his views of life, and all his actions be guided by it.

If the *δόξα* of a man be not such, if he understand the true purpose of life to lie in fulfilling the will of God, as Abraham understood it, and as Christ taught it, his actions will coincide with his faith in what he knows to be the will of God.

This is the reason why those who believe in the happiness of an individual life cannot believe in the doctrine of Christ. All their endeavours to do so will be in vain. In order to believe, they must change their views of life. Till they have done so, their actions will coincide with their creed, and not with their desires or their words.

The desire to believe in the doctrine of Christ, both of those who asked Him for some token, and of the believers of the present time, does not coincide with their lives, nor can it ever do so, however hard they may try to fit them together. They may pray to Christ-God, attend the Holy Communion, do good to mankind, build churches, convert others, and yet, with all this, they cannot really work for Christ; because *that* can proceed only from faith, which is based on a very different doctrine (*δόξα*) to the one which they profess. They cannot sacrifice the life of their only son, as Abraham did, who did not doubt for a moment that it was his duty to offer up his son as a sacrifice to God, to the God who alone gave import to his life. And in the same way, Christ and His disciples could not help giving up their lives to others, because in that alone lay the object and blessing of their lives.

It is from men's thus misunderstanding the substance of faith that their strange longing arises. They make themselves believe that it would be better to live up to the doctrine of Christ; and all the while they firmly believe in the individual life, and therefore choose to live contrary to Christ's doctrine.

The foundation of faith is a true comprehension of life, which enables man to distinguish what is important and good in life from what is unimportant and bad. Faith is a correct appreciation of all the manifestations of life. At the present time men, whose faith is grounded on a doctrine of their own, cannot make it agree with the faith which flows out of the doctrine of Christ any more than the disciples could. And we find this

misunderstanding more than once clearly and definitely spoken of in the Gospel. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew xx. 20-28, and in that according to Mark x. 35-45, after the saying, that the 'rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God,' and after the still more awful saying, that 'he who doth not leave all, doth not give up his life for Christ's sake, shall not be saved,' Peter asks, 'What, then, shall we have, who have left all and followed Thee?' In the Gospel according to Mark we read that James and John (or, according to Matthew, their mother) ask that 'they should sit, one on His right hand, the other on His left, in His glory.' They beg Him to confirm their faith by the promise of a reward. Christ answers Peter's question by a parable (Matt. xx. 1-16); and in answer to James, He says, 'Ye know not what ye ask,' *i.e.*, you ask for what cannot be. You do not understand my doctrine. My doctrine is the renunciation of individual life, and you ask for individual honour, and individual reward. You may 'drink of my cup,' or live; but to sit on my right hand, or my left, or to be equal to me, cannot be given you. And then Christ says, that it is only in this world that the powerful of the world think much of the glory and the power of individual life, and rejoice in it; but ye, who are my disciples, ought to know that the true life does not lie in individual happiness, but in ministering to all, in humbling ourselves before all. Man does not live to be ministered unto, but to minister to all, and to give up his individual life as a ransom for all. In answer to His disciples' request, which showed Him how little they understood His



doctrine, Christ does not command them to believe, *i.e.*, to change their appreciation of good and evil, which arose from the teaching they had imbibed before Him (He knows that it is impossible); but He explains what the true life is, on which faith is based, and shows that it is a true estimation of good and bad, important and unimportant.

Christ answers Peter's question, 'What reward shall we have for having left all, and followed Thee?' by the parable of the labourers who were hired at different times, and who received the same pay (Matt. xx. 1-16). He explains to Peter the error he is in respecting His doctrine, and that thence proceeds his want of faith. Christ says, it is only in individual life that reward is important in proportion to the work done. A belief in the necessity of reward being proportionate to the work itself, proceeds from the doctrine of individual life. This belief is based on a hypothesis, and on rights which we imagine that we have; but man has no rights—can never have any rights; he is only a debtor for the happiness given him, and therefore he has no right to expect anything. Even if he give up his whole life, he cannot give back what he has received, and therefore the master cannot be unjust. If a man declares that he has a right to his own life, and requires compensation from the Author of all—from Him who entrusted him with life—he only shows that he does not understand the true purpose for which life was given him.

Men, having obtained happiness, require more. These men stood unoccupied and miserable on the market-place, and did not live. The master hired



them and gave them the greatest good in life, viz., labour. They accepted the master's gracious gift, and then grew dissatisfied. They were dissatisfied because they had no clear consciousness of their state. They came to their work with the false idea that they had a right to their own lives and to their own work, and that, therefore, their work was to be rewarded. They did not understand that work itself was the greatest good given them ; in return for which they were to do good to others ; but that they could claim no retribution. And men cannot have a just and true faith as long as they possess the same erroneous idea of life as these labourers had.

Christ answers the direct demand of His disciples to confirm, to increase their faith by the parable of the master and the labourer, and explains still more clearly the groundwork of the faith he taught them.

Luke xvii. 3-10. The precept given by Christ to forgive our brother not only once, but seventy times seven, fills the disciples with awe at the difficulty which they would experience in putting such a precept into practice, and they say, 'Yes, but . . . to fulfil it we must believe, increase, and confirm our faith.' As they had asked before, 'What shall we have for it?' so do they again say, just as all who call themselves Christians say, 'I would believe, but I cannot ; strengthen my faith.' They say, 'Make us believe,' just as the disciples did when they asked for a miracle. 'Make us believe in our salvation by miracles and promises of reward.'

The disciples spoke just as we do. It would be well if, while continuing to lead our individual, wilful

lives, we could be made to believe that by fulfilling God's commandments we should be all the happier. We all ask for what is contrary to the whole spirit of Christ's doctrine, and we are surprised that we can by no means believe. And Christ answers the misunderstanding which existed then, and still exists, by a parable, in which He shows what true faith is. Faith cannot proceed from trust in what He says; faith comes only from a consciousness of our state. Faith is based only on the rational consciousness of what is best for us. He shows that it is impossible to rouse faith in men by promises of rewards and by threats of punishments; that it will be but a very weak trust which will be destroyed at the first temptation; that the faith which moves mountains, the faith which nothing can shake, is based on the consciousness of our inevitable peril, and of the sole salvation possible for us.

Faith needs no promises of reward. It is but necessary to understand that salvation from inevitable destruction lies in a general life for all humanity according to the will of the Master. He that has once understood this will seek no confirmation of his faith, but will be saved without his requiring any exhortation.

When the disciples beg Him to confirm their faith, Christ says, 'When the master comes home with his labourer from the field, he does not tell him to sit down and eat immediately, but first orders him to pen the cattle and to serve him; and, this done, the labourer sits down to his food and eats. The labourer obeys, and does not think himself ill used, neither

does he pride himself on his work, nor require thanks or a reward for it. He knows that so it must be, and that he has only done his duty; that is all that is required of him by his service, but just this is, at the same time, for his own good. In like manner, when you have done all you are bound to do, think that you have but done what was given you to do. He that understands his duty towards his Master will see that it is only by submitting to his Master's will that he can have life, and can know wherein lies the blessing of his life. And he will have faith—the faith which Christ teaches us. Faith, according to the doctrine of Christ, is based on a rational consciousness of the purport of life.

The foundation of faith, according to the doctrine of Christ, is *light*.

John i. 9-12. 'That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (v. 10) He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. (v. 11) He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. (v. 12) And as many as received Him and believed in His name, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' John iii. 19-21. 'And this is the condemnation,\* that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (v. 20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd, because they are evil. (v. 21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his

\* *χρίσις*—signifies *judgment* and not condemnation.

deeds may be made manifest, because they are wrought in God.'

He who has understood the doctrine of Christ can require no strengthening of his faith. Faith, according to Christ, is based on the light, on the truth. Not once does Christ call upon men to have faith in Him; He calls upon them to have faith in the truth.

John viii. 40. He says to the Jews, 'You seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. (v. 46) Which of you convinceth Me of untruth? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?' John xviii. 37, Christ says: 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.'

John xiv. 6. He says: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'

Further on, in the same chapter, Christ says to His disciples, 'The Father shall give you another Comforter, and He may abide with you for ever. (17) Even the spirit of truth, whom the world seeth not, neither knoweth; but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you and shall be in you.'

He says that His whole doctrine is truth, that He Himself is truth.

The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of truth, and, therefore, faith in Christ is not a trust in anything that refers to Jesus, but a knowledge of the truth. It is impossible to persuade or bribe a man to fulfil it. He that understands the doctrine of Christ will have faith in Him, because His doctrine is truth. He that knows the truth cannot refuse to believe in it. There-

fore, if a man feels himself to be sinking, he cannot refuse to take hold of the rope of salvation, and the question, What shall we do to believe? is one that shows a total misapprehension of Christ's doctrine.

## CHAPTER X.

WE say that it is hard to live in accordance with Christ's precepts! How can it be otherwise than hard whilst we conceal our state from ourselves and earnestly try to maintain the trust that our state is not what it really is? Calling that trust 'faith' we exalt it into something sacred, and either by violence, by working upon the feelings, by threats, by flattery, or by deceit we seek to allure others to that false trust. A Christian once said, '*Credo quia absurdum;*' and other Christians now enthusiastically repeat the words, thinking a belief in absurdities the best way to the truth.

A clever and learned man observed to me, a short time ago, in course of conversation, that the Christian doctrine was of no importance as a doctrine of morality. 'We find the same,' said he, 'in the teaching of the Stoics, the Brahmins, and in the Talmud. The substance of the Christian doctrine is in the theosophical teaching contained in the dogmas.' That means, that what is eternal and general to all humanity, what is necessary for life, and what is rational, is not of most value. But what is quite incomprehensible, and therefore unnecessary, but in the name of which millions have been put to death, is the most important point in Christianity!

We have formed an erroneous idea of life, both as



concerns ourselves personally and the world in general. We have based it on our own wickedness and on our personal lusts; and we look upon that erroneous idea—united but by outward observances to the doctrine of Christ—as most important and necessary to life. Were it not for that trust in what is but falsehood, which has been upheld by men for ages, the falsity of our view of life, as well as the truth of Christ's doctrine, would have become manifest long ago.

Awful as it may seem to say so, I sometimes think that, if the doctrine of Christ, with the Church teaching which has become a part of it, had never existed, those who now call themselves Christians would be nearer than they are now to the doctrine of Christ; *i.e.*, to a rational idea of the true happiness of life. The morality taught by all the prophets would not then have been a closed book for mankind. Men would have had their petty preachers of the truth, and they would have believed them. But now that the whole truth has been revealed, it seems so awful to those whose deeds are evil, that they have interpreted it falsely, and men have lost their trust in the truth. In our European world the saying of Christ, that 'He came into the world in order to bear witness of the truth, and that he who is of the truth hears Him,' has long since been answered in the words of Pilate: '*What is the truth?*' We have taken in earnest these words of Pilate's, expressive of such sad and deep irony, and we have made them our faith. In our world not only do all live without knowing the truth, without a desire to know it, but



with the firm conviction that of all idle occupations the idlest is the search after truth. The doctrine of life which all nations, long before the existence of European society, considered as most important, that doctrine which, as Christ told us, is the only thing needful, is alone excluded from our lives. This is done by the institution called the Church; and yet even those who themselves belong to that institution have long ceased to believe in it.

The only aperture which lets in the light, towards which the eyes of all who reflect and suffer turn, is concealed. There is but one answer to the question, 'What am I? what shall I do? can I not render my life easier by following the commandments of the God who, according to your words, came to save us?' and that answer is, 'Honour and obey the authorities, and believe in the Church.' 'But why is there so much suffering in this world?' cries a despairing voice; 'why is there so much evil?—can I not refuse to take part in it? Can evil not be mitigated?' The answer is, 'It is impossible. Thy wish to lead a good life, and to help others to do so, is but pride and vain-glory. The only thing thou canst do is to save thyself, thy soul, for a future life. If thou wishest to flee from the evils of the world, leave the world.' 'There is a way open to each,' says the teaching of the Church, 'but know, that having chosen it, thou hast lost all right to return to the world, that thou must cease to live, and must voluntarily die a lingering death.' There are only two ways open to us; our teachers tell us that 'we must either believe our spiritual pastors and obey them and those that are in

authority over us, and take an active part in the evil they organize, or else leave the world and enter a monastery, deprive ourselves of food and sleep, let our bodies rot on an iron pillar, bend and unbend our bodies in endless genuflections, and do nothing for our fellow-creatures.' Thus, a man must either confess the doctrines of Christ to be impracticable, and live contrary to it, or renounce the life of this world, which is but a species of slow self-murder.

Surprising as the erroneous assumption that the doctrine of Christ is sublime but impracticable may seem to him who understands it, the error by which it is maintained, viz., that he who wishes to keep the commandments of Christ not only in word but in deed, must leave the world, is still more surprising.

The erroneous idea, that it is better for a man to leave the world than to submit to its temptations, is an old error, known to the ancient Hebrews, but entirely foreign not only to the spirit of Christianity, but even to that of Judaism. It was against that very error that the story Christ loved and so often quoted, of the prophet Jonas, was written. The story contains one idea from beginning to end. The prophet Jonas wishes to be the only just man, and flies from association with the depraved inhabitants of Nineveh. But God shows him that he is a prophet—one whose duty it is to make known the truth to those that have gone astray, and that he must not flee from them, but live amongst them. Jonas has an aversion for the depraved Ninevites, and once more tries to escape by flight. But God brings him back in the body of a whale, and the will of the

Almighty is accomplished ; the Ninevites receive the teaching of God, through Jonas, and amend their lives. But Jonas does not rejoice at having been instrumental in accomplishing the will of God ; he is angry, jealous of the Ninevites ; he wishes to be the only wise and good man. He goes away into the wilderness, bemoans his fate, and reproaches God. And then a gourd grows in one night over Jonas, and protects him from the rays of the sun ; but on the next night the gourd is eaten by worms. Jonas, in his despair, reproaches God for letting the gourd, so precious to him, wither. Then God says to him, ' Thou regrettest the gourd, which thou callest thine ; it grew and perished in one night ; and thinkest thou I had no pity for so numerous a people, who were perishing, living like the beasts, unable to distinguish their right hands from their left ? Thy knowledge of the truth was needed that thou mightest give to those who had it not.'

Christ knew this story, and often quoted it ; we are likewise told in the Gospel that Christ Himself, after visiting John the Baptist, who had retired to the wilderness before he began his preaching, was subjected to the same temptation, and was conducted into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (by delusion). He overcame that delusion, and, in the strength of the spirit, came back into Galilee, and, from that time, without abhorring those that were depraved, He passed His life amongst publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, teaching them the truth.\*

\* Luke iv. 1, 2. Christ is led into the wilderness by delusion, in order to be tempted there. Matt. iv. 3, 5. Delusion says to

According to the teaching of the Church, Christ, God and man, gave us an example how we were to live. Christ passed His whole life, as we know, in the turmoil of life : with publicans, adulteresses, and with the Pharisees in Jerusalem. His two great commandments are—love to our fellow-creatures, and the preaching of His doctrine to all men. Both commandments require constant communication with the world. Yet the conclusion drawn from Christ's doctrine is that, in order to be saved, we must leave all, cease all communication with our fellow-creatures, and stand on a pillar. Thus it would seem that, in order to follow the example of Christ, we must do just the contrary of what He taught and of what He did Himself.

According to the interpretation given by the Church, Christ's doctrine does not teach either secular men or monks how they are to live in order to make their own lives and the lives of their fellow-creatures better, but teaches the former what they

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Christ that He is not the Son of God if He cannot change stones into bread. Christ answers : ' I can live without bread, I live by what is breathed into Me by God.' Then delusion says : ' If Thou be alive by what is breathed into Thee by God, cast Thyself down from this height ; Thou wilt kill Thy flesh, but the spirit breathed into Thee by God will not perish.' Christ answers : ' My life in the flesh is by the will of God. If I kill My flesh I act against the will of God—I tempt God.' Matt. iv. 8-11. Then delusion says : ' If it be so, serve the flesh, as all men do, and the flesh shall reward Thee.' Christ answers : ' My life is in the spirit ; but I cannot destroy the flesh, because the spirit is put into My flesh by the will of God. Therefore, while living in the flesh I serve God My Father.' And Christ returns from the wilderness into the world.

must believe in order to be saved in the next world, in spite of their evil lives ; and enjoins the latter to make their lives on earth still harder.

But this is not what Christ teaches us.

Christ preaches truth, and if abstract truth be truth, it will be truth in reality. If life in God be the only true life, blissful in itself, it will be true and blissful here on earth, in all the various circumstances of life. If life here did not confirm the doctrine of Christ, that doctrine would not be true.

Christ does not call men from good to evil, but, on the contrary, from evil to good. He pities men, whom He considers as lost sheep perishing without their shepherd, and promises them a shepherd and good pasture. He says that His disciples will be persecuted for His doctrine, that they must suffer, and bear the persecution of the world. But He does not say that if they follow His doctrine they will suffer with more firmness than if they follow the teaching of the world ; on the contrary, He says that those who follow the teaching of the world will be miserable, and those who follow His doctrine will be blessed.

Christ does not teach us that we shall be saved either through faith, or through asceticism, *i.e.*, self-deception, or voluntary torments in this life ; but He teaches us a life in which, besides salvation from the ruin of individual life, there will be less suffering and more joy than in individual life, even here on earth.

Revealing His doctrine to men, Christ says that by following His doctrine, even in the midst of those who do not do so, they will be happier than those



who do not fulfil His doctrine. Christ says that, even from a worldly point of view, it is a successful plan not to care about the life of this world.

Mark x. 28-31: 'Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee.' Matt. xix. 27. 'What shall we have therefore? (29) And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,' (30) but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life' (Matt. xix. 27; Luke v. 11; xviii. 28).

Christ mentions, it is true, that those who follow Him shall be persecuted by those who do not; but He does not say that the disciples shall lose anything by so doing. On the contrary, He says that His followers shall have more joy in this world than those who are not His.

We cannot doubt that Christ spoke and thought thus. He says it clearly; the spirit of His teaching proves it, as well as the way in which He Himself and His disciples lived. But is it true?

On an abstract examination of the question, whether the state of the followers of Christ or that of those who live for the world will be best, we cannot help seeing that the state of the followers of Christ must be better, because, by doing good to all, they avoid exciting the hatred of men. The follower of Christ will do no harm to any, and will therefore be



persecuted by the wicked ; but the followers of the world will be persecuted by *all*, because the law of life, of those who live for the world, is a law of strife, or the persecution of each other. The chances of suffering may be the same for both, with the difference that the followers of Christ will be ready to bear them, while the followers of the world will use all their endeavours to avoid them ; the followers of Christ will suffer, but will know that their suffering is necessary for the good of humanity, while the followers of the world will suffer without knowing the reason why they suffer. Reasoning abstractly, the state of the followers of Christ should be more profitable than that of the followers of the world. But is it so ?

Let each verify this by calling to mind all the trying moments of his life, all the suffering, both moral and physical, which he has gone through, and still goes through, and let him ask himself in whose name he bore, and still bears, all that misery. Was it for the sake of the world, or for the doctrine of Christ ? Let him examine his past life, and he will see that he never once suffered from having followed the doctrine of Christ ; he will see that all the unhappiness of his life proceeded from his having, contrary to his own inclinations, followed the teaching of the world.

During my life, which has been an exceptionally happy one, according to the opinion of the world, I can remember so much suffering borne by me for the sake of the world, that it might have sufficed for the life of one of the greatest martyrs of Christianity. All the most trying moments of my life, from the orgies

and debauches of my student days, to duels, war, ill-health—all the unnatural and painful conditions of life in which I now live—were and are but martyrdom for the sake of the world.

I speak of my life, which, as I say, has been an exceptionally happy one, according to the opinion of the world. But how many martyrs there are who have suffered, and still suffer, for the teaching of the world, whose sufferings I cannot even picture to myself!

We do not see the difficulty and peril there is in following the teaching of the world, only because we look upon all we bear for its sake as being absolutely necessary.

We have become convinced that all the misfortunes which we create for ourselves are indispensable conditions of life, and we cannot understand that Christ shows us the way to escape suffering and to attain happiness.

In order to examine the question, which life is a happier one, we must cast aside all our mistaken notions, and examine ourselves and all those around us without any preconceived idea.

Pass through a crowd of people, especially those living in a town, and see their wearied, sickly, and anxious faces; then think of your own life, of the lives of those you know; think of all the unnatural deaths, all the suicides which you may have chanced to hear of, and ask yourself what led to all the despair and suffering which drove these men to commit suicide. And you will see that nine-tenths of the suffering there is in this life is borne for the sake

of the world ; that it is all unnecessary suffering which might not exist ; that men are, for the most part, martyrs of the teaching of the world.

A short time ago, on a rainy Sunday in the autumn, I drove in an omnibus through the market-place near Souhareva tower, in Moscow. For the space of half a mile the carriage made its way through a compact mass of people. From morning to evening do thousands of human beings, the greater part of whom are ragged and hungry, prowl about here in the dirt, abusing, cheating, and hating each other. The same may be seen on all the market-places of Moscow. These men will spend their evenings in taverns and public-houses, and the night in their corners and dens. Sunday is the best day in the week for them. On Monday, in their infected dens, they will again set to the work which they are heartily sick of.

Reflect what the lives of all these men and women are ; think of all they have left, of the hard work to which they have voluntarily condemned themselves ; and you will see that they are true martyrs.

These men have left their homes and fields ; they have left their fathers, brothers, their wives and children ; they have forsaken all, and have come into the town to procure what the teaching of the world forces each to consider as indispensable. And not only these thousands and thousands of miserable beings who have lost all, and now live from hand to mouth on tripe and brandy, but all, I say, from workmen, cabmen, semstresses, harlots, to rich merchants, ministers, and their wives, lead the hardest, most

unnatural lives, and yet fail to attain what is considered necessary, according to the teaching of the world.

Tell me whether you can find among all these men, from the beggar to the rich man, a single man who finds that what he earns is sufficient for all that he considers as indispensably necessary, and you will not find one in a thousand. Each struggles to get what he does not of himself require, but what is considered requisite by the world, and the want of which, therefore, makes him miserable. No sooner has he attained it, than more and more is required, and so this labour of Sisyphus goes on without intermission, ruining life after life. Take, in an ascending scale, the fortunes of men, from those who spend thirty pounds a year to those who spend fifty thousand, and you will seldom find a man who is not tormented and worn out with his efforts to obtain four hundred if he have but three hundred, five hundred if he have four, and so on without end. There is not one who, having five hundred, would voluntarily exchange with him who has but four hundred. Each strives to lay a still heavier burden on his already heavy-laden life, and gives up his whole soul to the teaching of the world. To-day a man has earned an overcoat and goloshes; to-morrow he gets a watch and a chain; then a lodging with a comfortable sofa, carpets in the drawing-room, and velvet clothes; then he buys a house, horses, pictures in gilt frames; and then, having overworked himself, he falls ill and dies. Another continues the same career, likewise sacrificing his life to the same Moloch, dying in the same

way, without knowing why he does all this. Well, but perhaps, with all this, these men are happy.

What are the principal requisites for earthly happiness, those which no one can gainsay ?

The first condition essentially necessary for happiness has ever been admitted by all men to be a life in which the link between him and nature is not destroyed—that is, a life in the open air, in the sunshine, in communion with nature, plants and animals. Men have always considered being deprived of this as the greatest misfortune that could befall them. Prisoners feel this privation above all others. And now consider what the life of those who live according to the teaching of the world is. The more successful their worldly career is, the further they are from all that is true happiness. The higher the worldly prosperity they have attained, the less sunshine do they enjoy, the fewer are the fields, woods, animals they see. Many, indeed almost all, women dwelling in towns live to old age without having seen the rising of the sun more than once or twice in their lives. They have never seen the fields and woods, except through the windows of their coaches or of railway carriages ; not only have they never brought up and tended cows, horses, or poultry, but they have no idea even how animals grow and live. These people see stuffs, stones, wood, worked by human hands, and do not even see them in the light of the sun, but in an artificial light. They hear the noise of machinery, cannons, or musical instruments ; they inhale strong scents and tobacco-smoke ; their enfeebled digestions crave stimulating food that is neither fresh nor



savoury. Nor are they nearer to nature even when travelling from one place to another. They travel shut up in boxes. Wherever they go, be it into the country or abroad, the same curtains hide the light of the sun from their eyes; footmen, coachmen, watchmen, prevent all communication between them and nature. Wherever they go, they are, like prisoners, deprived of this condition which is so necessary for happiness. As prisoners find consolation in a blade of grass which grows in the yard of their prison, or in a spider, or a mouse, so do these men and women find consolation, from time to time, in keeping half-withered plants on their window-sills, or in parrots, lap-dogs, monkeys, the care of which they leave to others.

A second indubitable condition necessary for happiness is labour—congenial, free labour, physical labour, which gives a man a good appetite and sound, invigorating sleep. And, again, the greater the prosperity a man has attained, according to a worldly estimate, the further he is from this second condition, essentially necessary for happiness. All the 'fortunate' of this world, the great dignitaries and rich men, are either as completely deprived of labour as prisoners are, and struggle unsuccessfully against ill-health, which is the result of the absence of physical labour, and still more unsuccessfully against the *cranni* to which they are a prey (I say 'unsuccessfully,' for work is a source of pleasure only when it is needful), or they have work to do which they hate, as, for instance, our bankers, attorneys, generals, ministers. I say it is work they hate, because I never yet met one



amongst them who liked his work, and who found as much pleasure in it as does a stable-boy in clearing away the snow before his master's house. All these so-called fortunate beings have either no work to do or work that they hate; they are, indeed, in much the same position as a galley-slave.

A third condition essentially necessary for happiness is family life. And again, the further advanced men are in worldly prosperity, the less accessible that happiness is for them. The greater part of them are adulterers, and voluntarily renounce all family ties. Even if they be not adulterers, they consider children as a burden rather than a joy, and try by all possible means to make their unions sterile. If they have children, they take no joy in them. They are obliged to confide them to others, for the most part to complete strangers; at first they are left to the care of foreign nurses or governesses, then sent to some Government school, and the children grow up as miserable as their parents,\* and often have but one feeling towards their parents, viz., the wish for their death, that they may inherit their property. These men are not prisoners, but the result is more painful

\* The way we often hear parents try to justify such a state of things is really surprising. 'I want nothing for myself,' says a father; 'my life is a hard one; but I love my children, all I do is for them,' *i.e.* 'I know, by experience, that to live as I do is to suffer, and I therefore bring up my children to be as unhappy as I am. I love them, and therefore I make them live in a town full of physical and moral infection, give them into the hands of mercenary strangers, and both physically and morally spoil my children.' Thus do parents try to justify their own irrational lives.

than that entire separation from all family ties to which a prisoner is condemned.

A fourth condition essentially necessary for happiness is a free, friendly communication with all men. And again, the higher the step on which a man stands in the world, the further he is from this condition. The higher your position, the narrower and closer is the circle of men with whom you can have any communication, and the lower in intellectual and moral development are the few persons who form this spell-bound circle, out of which there is no issue. The whole world is open to the peasant and his wife. If one million of men refuse to have any intercourse with him, there are eighty millions left of working men like himself, with whom, from Archangelsk to Astrachan, he enters immediately into the closest, most brotherly communication, without waiting to be called upon or introduced. There are, for a functionary and his wife, hundreds of men who are their equals; but their superiors do not admit them into their circle, and they are cut off from all the lower classes. There may be ten fashionable families for a rich man of the world and his wife, but they are cut off from all the rest. Ministers and very wealthy men and their families may find about ten friends as important and as rich as themselves. The circle of emperors and kings is still more restricted. Is not that called solitary confinement, when a prisoner can only have communication with two or three jailers?

The fifth and last condition essentially necessary for happiness is health and a painless death. And again, the higher a man stands on the social scale,

the further he is from it. Take, for instance, a moderately rich man and his wife, and a well-to-do countryman and his wife ; in spite of hunger and the hard work—which is the peasant's lot through the inhumanity of others, and not through any fault of his own—you will find, if you compare the two, that the lower men stand on the social scale the healthier they are, and the higher they stand the weaker they are in health. Recall to your minds all the rich men and their wives whom you have ever known, and those whom you know at present, and you will see that they almost all suffer from ill-health. A healthy man amongst them—one who does not take medicine continually, or at least periodically every summer—is as great an exception as is a sick man amongst the working classes. Almost all these 'fortunate beings' are toothless, grey-haired, or bald at the age when a working man is still in the full vigour of his manhood. They are almost all sufferers from nervous diseases, dyspepsia or worse, from over-eating themselves, from drunkenness or depravity ; and those who do not die young, spend half their lives under medical treatment, using frequent injections of morphine, and becoming shrivelled cripples, unable to maintain themselves ; living on like parasites. Think of what the *deaths* of these men are : one has shot himself, another's body has rotted from disease, another again has died in his old age from a too frequent use of comfortatives ; one has died in a drunken fit, another of gluttony, etc. All perish, one after the other, for the world's sake. And the crowd crawls after them like martyrs in search of suffering and death.

One life after another is cast under the car of their god ; the car drives on, tearing lives to pieces, and again and again fresh victims fall under its wheels, with groans, wails, and curses.

It is difficult to live as Christ enjoins ! Christ says, ' He who will follow Me must leave houses, fields, and brethren, and he shall receive a hundredfold more than houses, fields, and brethren in this world, and shall, besides, have life eternal.' And none follow Him. The world says, ' Leave thy home and thy brothers ; leave the country to live in a corrupt town ; pass thy whole life either as a servant in a bath-house, soaping other people's backs in a vapour-bath ; or as a clerk, counting other people's money ; or as an attorney-general, spending thy life in courts of law, busied with various documents, in order to make the fate of the miserable more miserable still ; or as a minister, hastily signing useless papers all thy life ; or as a commander-in-chief, killing thy brethren : lead a wicked life, the end of which is always a painful death, and thou shalt suffer in this life, and not attain eternal life ;' and all go the world's way. Christ says, ' Take up thy cross, and follow Me.' By which He means, ' Bear the fate allotted thee humbly, and submit to Me, your God ;' and none do so. But the first lost man, wearing an epaulet, and fit for nothing but murder, who says, ' Take up, not the cross, but thy knapsack and thy sword, and follow me to suffering and certain death,' is instantly obeyed.

Leaving their parents, their wives and children, they go in their buffoon attire, blindly submissive to some superior whom they hardly know ; cold,

hungry, worn out by a march above their strength, they follow him like a herd of oxen to the slaughter. But they are not oxen, they are men! They cannot help knowing that they are driven to slaughter, with the unsolvable question, Why must I go? and with despair in their hearts they go on, many dying off through cold, hunger, and infectious diseases, till those that are left are placed under bullets and cannon balls, and ordered to kill men whom they know nothing about. They kill and are at last killed themselves, and not one of those who kills his fellow-creature knows why he does so. The Turks roast them alive; they flay them; they tear out their bowels. And no sooner does anyone call than others go to the same dreadful suffering and to death. And nobody finds it hard. Neither do they themselves think it hard, nor do their fathers and mothers think so; the latter even advise their children to go. Not only do they think it necessary and unavoidable, but even perfectly right and moral.

We might think the fulfilling of Christ's doctrine difficult if it were really an easy and pleasant thing to live according to the teaching of the world. But it is much more difficult, dangerous, and painful to do so than it is to live up to the doctrine of Christ.

It is said that formerly there were martyrs for Christianity, but these were exceptional cases; we reckon about three hundred and eighty thousand voluntary and involuntary martyrs for Christianity in the course of 1800 years. Now count those that have died for the teaching for the world, and for each martyr for Christianity you will find a thousand



martyrs for the world's sake, martyrs whose sufferings were a hundredfold more dreadful. Thirty millions have been killed in war during the present century alone.

Those were all martyrs for the world's sake. Had they but rejected the teaching of the world, even without following the doctrine of Christ, they would have escaped suffering and death.

Were a man but to act as he finds best for himself, were he but to refuse to go to war, he would have to dig ditches ; but he would not be tortured in Sebastopol or Plevna. Let a man not believe that it is indispensable to wear a watch-chain and to have useless drawing-rooms, let him but understand that all the foolish things the world teaches him to consider as indispensable are but useless trash, and he will not work beyond his strength ; he will not have to endure suffering and constant care ; he will not have to labour without purpose or rest ; He will not be deprived of communion with nature, or of the work he loves, or of his family or his health, and he will not die a uselessly painful death.

We need not be martyrs for Christ's sake ; that is not what He requires of us. But He teaches us to cease martyrizing our own selves for the sake of the false teaching of the world.

The doctrine of Christ has a deep metaphysical purport ; it has a purport general to all humanity ; the doctrine of Christ has the simplest, clearest, most practicable purport for each of us. We may express this idea in a few words. Christ teaches men not to act foolishly. In this lies the simplest sense of



Christ's doctrine, and it is one each has it in his power to understand.

Christ says, 'Never give way to angry feelings, nor consider another as worse than thyself; it is foolish. If thou give way to anger, if thou abuse others, it will be worse for thee.' Christ says, too, 'Lust not after all women, but take one to thee, and live with her; it will be better for thee.' He says, likewise, 'Make no promise, lest thou be forced to act foolishly and wickedly.' He says, likewise, 'Never return evil for evil, for it will fall back upon thee.' Christ says, 'Consider no men as strangers to thee because they live in other lands and speak in other tongues than thou dost. If thou consider them as thine enemies, they will do the same in respect to thee, and it will be worse for thee. Do not act thus, and it will be better for thee.'

Yes, is the answer, but as the world is organized it is more difficult to resist it than to live up to its precepts. If a man refuse to become a soldier he will be imprisoned, and possibly shot. If a man do not assure his future by acquiring property for himself and his family, they will all starve. Men say so in order to defend the social organization of the world, but they do not think so themselves. They say so only because they cannot deny the justice of Christ's doctrine, which they pretend to believe in, and they must justify themselves for not fulfilling it, in some way.

Christ calls men to the spring which is near them. Men suffer from thirst, eat mud, drink each other's blood; but their teachers have told them that they will suffer more if they go to the spring towards

which Christ calls them, and men believe them rather than Christ, and suffer and die of thirst when they are but a few steps from the spring, and dare not approach it. But if we believed in Christ, if we believed that He came to bring bliss on earth, if we believed that He offers us, who are thirsting, a spring of living water, if we drew near it, we should see how craftily we are deceived by the Church, and how senseless it is to suffer as we do, when salvation is so near. Accept the doctrine of Christ in all its sublime simplicity, and the grievous deception in which you all live will grow clear to you.

We labour, generation after generation, to secure our lives by violence and the consolidation of property. We think that our happiness depends upon power and property. We are so used to that idea that the doctrine of Christ—which teaches us that the happiness of man does not lie in wealth, that a rich man cannot be happy—seems to us to require some great sacrifice for the sake of future bliss. And yet Christ does not call upon us to make any sacrifice; His doctrine does not tend towards making our present lives worse for us, but better. Christ in His infinite love teaches men to forbear from trying to assure their lives by violence, from caring about riches, just as philanthropists teach men to forbear from quarrelling and drunkenness. Christ says that if men live without resisting evil, and without riches, they will be happier, and He confirms His teaching by His own life. He says that he who lives according to His doctrine must be ready to die at any moment of his life, either of cold

or hunger, and cannot call a single hour of his life his own. And so it seems that Christ requires great sacrifices of us; yet it is but a general assertion of the inevitable condition of each man. The follower of Christ must always be ready to suffer and to die. Is not the follower of the world in the same position? We are so used to the deception we are in, that we have come to consider all that we do for the imaginary security of our lives—our armies, fortresses, medicines, property, money—as indispensable for the welfare of our lives. We forget what happened to him who intended to build barns, in order to provide himself with riches for a long time. He died the same night. All we do for the security of our lives is but what the ostrich does when hiding its head in order not to see itself killed. We do worse, for in order to secure an uncertain life, for an uncertain future, we resolutely ruin our real lives in the actual present.

The deception lies in the false assumption that we can secure the welfare of our lives by a struggle with others. We are so used to this erroneous idea that we do not see all we lose. We lose even our lives. Our lives are swallowed up in the cares of this world, so that no real life is left.

Let us set aside all we have become so used to, and then we shall see that all we do for the imaginary security of our lives is not done to assure our welfare, but to make us forget that our life here is not secure, and that it never can be secure. The French take up arms in the year 1870 to assure their existence, and that leads to the destruction of hundreds and thou-

sands of Frenchmen ; and every nation that takes up arms does the same thing with the same result. The rich man thinks the welfare of his life is assured by his money, and the money attracts a robber who kills him. A man who is over careful of his health seeks to assure it by taking medicine, and the medicine kills him by slow degrees ; and even if it do not kill him, it deprives him of all vigour and makes him like the paralytic who hardly lived during thirty-five years, while waiting for the angel at the pool.

The doctrine of Christ—that life cannot be assured, and that we must be ready for suffering and death every moment of our lives—is incontestably better than the teaching of the world, which says that we must strive to make our lives as comfortable as we can ; it is better because, though the impossibility of avoiding death and the uncertainty of life are the same, yet, according to Christ's doctrine, life is not wholly swallowed up in the idle employment of trying to ensure our own comfort, but is free, and can be given up to the only aim natural to it, namely, our own happiness in that of others. The follower of Christ will be poor. Yes, but he will enjoy the blessings given him by God. We have come to consider the word 'poverty' as expressive of misery, yet it really is happiness. 'He is poor' means that he does not live in a town, but in the country ; he does not sit idly at home, but labours in the fields or the woods ; he sees the sunshine, the sky, beasts, and birds ; he need not take thought what he shall do to excite his appetite, to facilitate his digestion ; but he feels hungry three times a day. He does not toss

about on his soft pillows thinking how to cure himself of sleeplessness, but sleeps soundly after his work. He sees his children around him, and lives in friendly communion with men. The main point is that he is not obliged to do work which he hates, and he need not fear the future. He will be ill, suffer, die as others do (and judging by the way the poor suffer and die, his death will be an easier one than that of the rich); but he will indubitably have led a happier life. We must be poor, we must be beggars, wanderers on the face of the earth (*πτόχος* means 'wanderer'); that is what Christ taught us, and without it we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

'But then we shall starve,' is the answer. Christ has given us one short saying in reply to this observation, a saying which has been usually interpreted as justifying the idleness of the clergy. Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7.

10. 'Take neither scrip for thy journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor staves, because *he who works is worthy of his meat*. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the *labourer is worthy of his hire*.'

*He that worketh* (*ἐξερτι*) signifies literally, 'can and shall have food.' It is a very short saying, but he who understands it as Christ did, will never argue that if a man have no personal property he must die of hunger. In order to understand the saying clearly, we must renounce the idea which the dogma of the redemption has made habitual to us, viz., that the happiness of man lies in idleness. We must re-establish in our minds the idea, natural to all un-



perverted men, that the necessary condition of happiness for man is labour, and not idleness; that every man must labour; that his life will be as wearisome and as hard without work as it is for an ant, a horse, or any other animal. We must cast aside the barbarous idea that the condition of a man who has an inexhaustible rouble in his pocket — a lucrative post, or some landed property which enables him to live in idleness — is a naturally happy condition. We must re-establish in our minds the idea of labour which all unperverted men have, and to which Christ referred when He said that ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire.’ Christ never could have thought that men would come to consider labour as a curse, and therefore He could not imagine a man who did not work, or who had no wish to work. It was an understood thing for Him that all His followers laboured, and He says that a man’s labour feeds Him. And if one man profits by the work of another man, he will feed him who works for him; and so he that labours will always have food. He will not be rich; but there can be no doubt of his having food.

The difference is that, according to the teaching of the world, labour is a man’s service, for which he considers himself entitled to more or less food in proportion to the work he does; while according to the doctrine of Christ labour is the necessary condition of life, and food its inevitable consequence. Work is the result of food, and food is the result of work; it is an eternal cycle—one is the effect and the cause of the other. However hard-hearted a man may be, he will feed his workman as he feeds his



horse, and he will give the workman sufficient food to enable him to work.

‘The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His soul as a ransom for many.’ According to the doctrine of Christ every man will lead a better life if he understand that his duty is not to get as much work as he can out of others, but to pass his own life in working for them. The man who acts thus, Christ says, is worthy of his hire, and he cannot fail to obtain it. By the words ‘Man does not live to be ministered unto, but to minister to others,’ Christ lays the foundation of what is to assure the material existence of man; and by the words ‘he who works is worthy of his hire’ Christ sets aside the argument, so often used against the possibility of fulfilling His doctrine, that he who does so will perish of hunger and cold. Christ shows that a man does not assure his own food by depriving others of it, but by making himself useful and necessary. The more useful he be, the more assured his existence will be.

In our present social adjustments, those who do not fulfil the law of Christ, but who are forced by poverty to work for their neighbours, do not starve. Then how can we say that those who do fulfil His commandments, who work for their fellow-creatures, will starve? No man can starve while the rich have bread. Millions of men in Russia possessing no property live by their work alone.

A Christian will be as sure of his daily bread amongst pagans as amongst Christians. He works for others, consequently he is of use to them, and

therefore he will be fed. A dog that is useful is fed and taken care of, then how can we think a human being will not be fed and taken care of?

But if a man be sick, he is of no use; he cannot work; no one will give him food. People say so, but they act in a very different way. The very persons who deny the practicability of Christ's doctrine, in fact fulfil it. They do not even cast a sheep, an ox, a dog that is ill adrift, neither do they kill an old horse, but give it work proportionate to its strength; they feed their lambs, their sucking-pigs, and puppies in expectation of deriving profit from them by-and-by, and will they not feed a man when he falls ill?

Nine-tenths of the lower classes are fed as beasts of burden are, by the one-tenth—by the rich and powerful of the earth. And however great the error may be in which this one-tenth lives, and however much they may despise the other nine-tenths, they never deprive the other nine-tenths of the food necessary for their sustenance.

Wherever man has worked, he has received food, as each horse receives its fodder. He is fed even though he work grudgingly, unwillingly, only caring to get his daily labour over as quickly as possible, or longing to earn as much as possible in order to get the upper hand of his master. Even he does not remain without food, and he is happier than the one who lives by the labour of others. And how much happier would the man be who worked in accordance with the doctrine of Christ, whose aim would be to work as much as possible, and to receive as little as possible! How much happier will his position be

when there will be several around him, perhaps many such as he who will serve him in his turn.

The doctrine of Christ about work and its fruit is shown in the story of the five and seven thousand men fed with two fishes and five loaves. Man will attain the highest happiness possible on earth when each, instead of only caring about his own personal comfort, acts as Christ taught those assembled on the sea-shore to do.

It was necessary to feed several thousand men. One of the disciples said to Christ that a boy there had a few fishes. The disciples had also a few loaves. Christ knew that some of those who had come from a distance had brought food with them and others had not. That many had brought provisions with them is evident from there being twelve basket-fulls gathered of what remained, as we read in all the four Gospels. (If nobody had had anything except the boy, there would not have been twelve baskets in the field.) Had Christ not done what He did, that is, the 'miracle' of feeding thousands with five loaves, what now takes place in the world would have taken place then. Those who had provisions with them would have eaten all they had, would have over-eaten themselves rather than that anything should be left. Misers would perhaps have taken the remainder home. Those who had nothing would have remained hungry, looking on with wicked envy at those who ate, and some would very likely have stolen from those who had provisions. Quarrelling and fighting would have ensued, and some would have gone home satisfied, the others hungry and

cross ; exactly what takes place in our present lives would have happened then.

But Christ knew what He meant to do ; He told them all to sit in a circle, and enjoined His disciples to offer a part of what they had to those next them, and to tell others to do the same. The result was, that when all those who had brought provisions with them followed the example set them by the disciples, and offered a share of their provisions to others, there was enough for all. All were satisfied, and so much remained that twelve baskets were filled.

Christ teaches men to act thus in all the circumstances of life, for this is the law of humanity. Labour is the necessary condition of life ; and work is a source of happiness for man. But if a man keep to himself the fruit of his own or others' work, he prevents its conducing to the general good of mankind : by giving up his work to others he acts for the good of all.

We are accustomed to say, if men do not despoil each other they will starve. Would it not be more correct to say, if men despoil each other there will always be some who will starve, for that is the actual fact.

Be a man a follower of Christ or a follower of the world, he is never entirely independent of others : others have taken care of him, fed him, and do still take care of him. But, according to the teaching of the world, man forces others to continue feeding him and his family by threats and violence. According to Christ's doctrine, man is taken care of, brought up and fed by others ; but he does not force others to

continue feeding him, but tries to serve others in his turn, to do as much good as possible to all his fellow-creatures. Which life is then a truer, more rational and happier one? Is it a life in accordance with the teaching of the world, or in accordance with Christ's doctrine?

## XI.

THE doctrine of Christ establishes the kingdom of God on earth. To think that it is difficult to fulfil His doctrine is an error. It is not difficult; indeed, he who has once clearly understood it cannot do otherwise than fulfil it, and the fulfilling of Christ's doctrine does not involve us in suffering, it really saves us from nine-tenths of the suffering which we must bear for the world's sake.

And, when I had understood this, I asked myself why I had never followed Christ's doctrine which leads to salvation and happiness, but had followed a contrary teaching which had brought me nothing but suffering. There could be but one answer to that question—*the truth had been hidden from me.*

When first Christ's doctrine grew clear to me, I did not think my having understood it would lead me to renounce the teaching of the Church. It seemed to me only that the Church had not arrived at the conclusions which the doctrine of Christ leads to; but I did not think that the new light which was revealed to me, and the conclusions which I drew from it would separate me entirely from the Church. Not once did I try during my researches to discover any

error in the teaching of the Church ; I intentionally closed my eyes to the views which seemed strange and ambiguous to me, as long as they did not absolutely contradict what I considered to be the basis of the Christian doctrine.

But the further I advanced in the study of the Gospel, and the clearer the purport of Christ's doctrine grew, the more inevitable it became for me to choose between the doctrine of Christ, which was rational, clear, and in harmony with my conscience, and a teaching which was in direct opposition to it, and which gave me nothing but the consciousness of my own peril and that of others. I could not help throwing each of the Church theses aside, one after the other. I did it most unwillingly, often struggling with my feelings, longing to soften the discordance between my reason and the teaching of the Church. But when I had ended my work, I saw that however hard I might try to keep something, at least, of Church teaching, nothing really was left me.

As I was drawing towards the close of my work, it happened that my son, a boy, told me that two of our servants, perfectly uneducated men, who hardly knew how to read, had been disputing about a passage in some book, in which it was affirmed that it is no sin to kill criminals, or to kill men in war. I could not believe such a statement could have been published, and asked to see the book. It was 'An Exposition of the Book of Prayer,' third edition (eightieth thousand), Moscow, 1879. I read page 163.

Q. 'What is the sixth commandment?'



A. 'Thou shalt not kill.'—'What does God forbid by this commandment?' 'He forbids our killing, that is, depriving a man of life.'—'Is it a sin to punish a criminal by death, according to the law, or to kill our enemies in war?' 'It is no sin to do so. A criminal is put to death, in order to put a stop to the evil which he does. Enemies are killed in the war in which we fight for our sovereign and our country.' These are the only words which explain why this commandment is repealed. I could hardly believe my own eyes.

The disputants asked my opinion upon the subject. I said to the one who upheld that it was quite right, that the interpretation was incorrect. 'Then how is it that incorrect statements are printed?' asked he. I could give him no answer. I kept the book and looked it through. The book contains: (1) Prayers, with instructions concerning genuflections, and the way the fingers are to be joined in making the sign of the cross. (2) The interpretation of the Creed. (3) Extracts from the fifth chapter of Matthew, without any explanations, in which the sayings contained in the chapter are, for some unknown reason, called the 'beatitudes.' (4) The ten commandments, with explanations which annul them; and (5) Anthems for feast-days.

As I have said, I had not only tried to avoid finding fault with the teaching of the Church, but I had tried to view it in its best light, and had not sought to discover its weak points. Though well acquainted with its academical literature, I was completely ignorant of its books for the use of schools. The

enormous circulation of a Prayer-Book, which excited doubt even in ignorant men, struck me.

I could not believe that a Prayer-Book, the contents of which were quite pagan, was the Church teaching, propagated amongst the people. In order to see if it were really the case, I bought all the books published by the Synod, or allowed to be published by it, in which there were short explanations of the Church Creed, for the use of children and uneducated people, and I read them.

The contents were almost new for me. At the time when I learned the Bible history and the catechism, these books did not exist. There was, at that time; as far as I can remember, neither any explanation of the beatitudes, nor were we told that *to kill a fellow-creature is no sin*. This was not to be found in the old Russian catechisms of Platon;\* neither is it to be found in the catechisms of Peter Mognilla, or of Beliakoff.† It was an innovation made by Filaret, who likewise wrote a catechism for the military classes. The 'Exposition of the Book of Prayer' was taken from that very catechism. The book which serves as the basis is, 'A Complete *Christian* Catechism for the use of *all Orthodox Christians*, published by order of his Imperial Majesty.'

The book is divided into three parts : on faith, hope and love. The first part contains an analysis of the Nicean Creed. The second, an analysis of the Lord's Prayer, and of eight verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, which form the introduction to the Sermon

\* The Moscow Metropolitan, 1785.

† The Moscow Metropolitan, 1826-1868.

on the Mount, and which are, for some reason unknown, termed 'beatitudes.' Both these sections treat of the dogmas of the Church, of prayers and sacraments. The third part treats of the duties of a Christian. We do not find the commandments of Christ expounded in this part, but the ten commandments of Moses. These commandments are expounded in a way that seems to enjoin men to leave them unfulfilled, and to act contrary to them. In reference to the first commandment, which enjoins us to worship God alone, the catechism teaches us to worship angels and saints, as well as the Virgin Mary and the three persons of the godhead. ('The Complete Catechism,' pages 107, 108.) In reference to the second commandment, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image,' the catechism teaches us to worship images (p. 108). In reference to the third commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' the catechism tells men it is their duty to take an oath every time the *legal authorities* may require it of them (p. 111). In reference to the fourth commandment, 'To keep holy the Saturday,' the catechism enjoins us to keep Sunday holy, thirteen great holidays, and a number of smaller ones, and to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays (p. 112-115). In reference to the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' the catechism tells us it is our bounden duty to honour our sovereign, our father-land, our spiritual pastors, and all those *who are put in authority over us*; and about three pages are taken up with the enumeration of the authorities we are to honour—schoolmasters, *civil commanders*,

*judges, military commanders, masters (sic) for those who serve and whose property they are* (p. 116-119). I cite from the 64th edition of the catechism published in 1880. Twenty years have gone by since slavery has been abolished, and no one has taken the trouble to remove the sentence which was added to the commandment, 'Honour thy father and mother,' in order to uphold and justify slavery.

With regard to the sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' men are taught from the very first lines to kill.

Q. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

A. Murder; or taking away our neighbour's life in any way.

Q. Is taking a man's life always illegal murder?

A. Murder is not unlawful, when it is *our duty* to take away a man's life; for instance:

1. When we *punish* a criminal by death.

2. When we kill the enemies *in fighting* for our sovereign and our native land.

And further on:

Q. What other instances can you cite of murder?

A. . . . When a man *harbours* a murderer or *sets him free*.

And that is published in hundreds and thousands of copies, and instilled into the Russians by violence, by threats and fear of punishment, under pretence of its being the Christian doctrine. This is taught to the whole Russian nation. This is taught to innocent children, in speaking of whom Christ said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, for theirs is the kingdom

of God'; to children whom we must be like, in order to enter the kingdom of God; like them in knowing nought of all this; to children, in speaking of whom Christ said, 'Woe to him that tempteth one of these little ones.' And these children are made to learn this; they are told that it is the sacred law of God!

Such things are not proclamations secretly propagated, under fear of being sent to hard work in the mines; but they are proclamations, acting contrary to which leads men to hard work in the mines. While I write, a chill creeps over me at my daring to say what I must say—that we have no right to annihilate the commandments of God, which are written in all His laws and in all our hearts, by adding such words as 'duty,' 'our sovereign,' 'our father-land,' etc., which explain nothing.

Yes, what Christ warned us against has come to pass, for He said (Luke xi. 33-36, and Matt. vi. 23): 'Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkened. If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'

The light which is in us had indeed become darkness; and that darkness is an awful one.

Christ said, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees; for ye shut up the kingdom of God against men. For ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer ye others to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore are ye still more guilty. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass seas and lands to make

one proselyte, and when ye have done so, ye make him worse than he had been before. Woe unto you, blind guides ! . . .'

'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye build up the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and you suppose that if you had lived in the days when the prophets were martyred, you would not have joined in shedding their blood. Then ye are witnesses against yourselves, that you are no better than those who killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure begun by those like ye yourselves. And behold, I will send unto you wise prophets and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues and drive them from city to city. And may all the righteous blood shed since the days of Abel fall back upon your heads.

'Every blasphemy may be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven.'

Is it not as if this had been written but yesterday against those who now force men to accept their faith, and persecute and destroy all the prophets and just men, who try to bring their deception to light.

And I saw that though the Church calls its teaching a Christian doctrine, it is in truth the very darkness against which Christ strove and enjoined His disciples to strive.

The doctrine of Christ has two parts. Firstly, it bears upon the life of each individual and upon our social lives; or it has an ethical mission. Secondly, it points out why men ought to live in the way it enjoins and not



otherwise; or it has a metaphysical mission. One is the effect and at the same time the cause of the other. Man must live thus because such is the purpose of his creation; or the purpose of his creation is such, and therefore he must live thus. These two sides of every doctrine are to be found in all the religions of the world. Such is the religion of Brahma, Confucius, Buddha, Moses; and such is the religion of Christ. It teaches us how we are to live; and explains why we are to live thus. But what befell all these other doctrines has befallen the doctrine of Christ also. Men have turned aside from it; there are many who try to justify their having done so. Sitting down in Moses' seat, they explain the metaphysical part of the doctrine in a way that makes the ethical requirements of the doctrine no longer obligatory, and they replace them by outward worship, rites, and ceremonies. The same occurs in all religions, but it appears to me that *never* has the evil influence been so striking as in Christianity. It acted with peculiar force, because the doctrine of Christ is the most sublime of all doctrines; it is the most sublime just because the metaphysical and ethical parts of the doctrine are so indissolubly bound together, and so bear upon each other, that it is impossible to separate one from the other, without depriving the whole doctrine of its true sense. The doctrine of Christ is ultra-Protestantism, for it rejects not only all the ritualistic observances of Judaism, but every outward form of worship. This rupture in Christianity could have no other effect than completely to pervert the doctrine and deprive it of all sense. And it did so. The rupture between

the doctrine of life and the exposition how we were to live began from the sermon of Paul, who did not know the ethical teaching, expressed in the Gospels of Matthew, and who preached a metaphysically cabalistic theory, foreign to Christ; the rupture was definitely accomplished in the time of Constantine, when it was found possible to array the whole pagan course of life in Christian clothing, without any change, and then to call it Christianity. From the time of Constantine, the heathen of heathens, whom the Church has canonized for all his vices and crimes, began 'councils,' and the centre of gravity of Christianity was transferred to the metaphysical side of the teaching alone. And this metaphysical teaching, with the rites which form part of it, losing more and more of its fundamental sense, reached its present point: it has become a teaching which explains the mysteries of life in heaven, gives the most complicated rites for divine worship, but at the same time gives *no* religious teaching at all concerning life on earth.

All religious creeds, except that of the Christian Church, enjoin, besides the observance of certain rites, good deeds and forbearance from evil ones. Judaism requires circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, the bestowing of alms, the keeping of the year of jubilee, and many other things. Mahometanism requires circumcision, daily prayers five times a day, the tenth part of a man's riches to be given to the poor, the adoration of the tomb of the prophet, and so on. We find the same in all other religions. Be the duties good or bad, they are *deeds*. Pseudo-

Christianity alone exacts nothing of its followers. There is nothing that is obligatory to a Christian, if we except fast-days and prayers, which the Church itself does not consider as obligatory ; there is nothing that he must refrain from. All that is necessary for a pseudo-Christian is never to neglect the sacraments. But the believer does not administer the sacraments to himself ; they are administered to him by others. No obligation lies on the pseudo-Christian ; the Church does all that is needful for him : he is baptized, anointed, the sacrament of the Holy Communion is administered to him, and the sacrament of Extreme Unction ; his confession is taken for granted if he be unable to make it orally, prayers are said for him, and he is saved. From the time of Constantine the Church never required any deeds of its members : it never even enjoined a man to refrain from anything. The Christian Church acknowledged and consecrated all that had existed in the pagan world. It acknowledged and consecrated divorce, slavery, courts of law, and all the powers which had existed before, such as war and persecution, and only required evil to be renounced in word at baptism. The Church acknowledged the doctrine of Christ in word, but denied it in deed.

Instead of pointing out to the world what life ought to be, the Church expounded the metaphysical part of Christ's doctrine in a way that required no duties, and did not hinder people from living on as they had lived before. The Church having once given way to the world, followed it ever after. The world organized its existence in direct opposition to

the doctrine of Christ, and the Church invented metaphors according to which it appeared that men who really lived contrary to the law of Christ lived in accordance with it. And the world began to lead a life which rapidly grew worse than that of the pagans, and the Church began to justify this way of living, and to affirm that it was strictly in accordance with the doctrine of Christ.

But a time came when the light of the true doctrine, which lies in the Gospel, penetrated amongst the people in spite of the Church, which had tried to conceal the doctrine by forbidding the translation of the Bible; the time came when this light penetrated among the people through so-called sectarians, and even through free-thinkers, and then the falsity of the Church teaching grew evident to all, and men began to change their former lives and to live up to that doctrine of Christ which had reached them independently of the Church.

Thus men annihilated slavery, which had been justified by the Church; annihilated religious executions which had been sanctioned by the Church; annihilated the power of sovereigns and popes which had been consecrated by the Church; and now the turn of property and kingdoms has come. The Church never rose in defence of anything, and cannot do so, because the annihilation of these false principles of life is based on the Christian doctrine which the Church has preached and still preaches.

The doctrine of life has emancipated itself from the Church, and has established itself independently of it. The Church retains the right to interpret Christ's

doctrine ; but what interpretation can it give ? The metaphysical explanation of the doctrine has weight only when it explains what life is, or ought to be. But no such teaching is left to the Church. It could only speak of the life which it had organized of old, and which is now no more. If any of the old interpretations remain, as, for instance, when the catechism tells us that we must kill when it is *our duty* to do so, nobody believes them ; and nothing is left to the Church but its temples, images, brocades, and *words*.

The Church has carried the light of the Christian doctrine of life through eighteen centuries ; and while trying to conceal it in its raiment has been itself burnt in this light. The world, with its social adjustments consecrated by the Church, has now thrown the Church aside in the name of the same Christian truths which the Church unwillingly carried along with it, and the world now lives without it. The Church is done with, and it is impossible to conceal the fact. All those who really live, and do not drearily vegetate, in our European world have left the Church.

All Churches, whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant, are like sentinels keeping guard over a captive, while the captive has escaped, and even walks about amongst the sentinels. All that now forms true 'life' in the world, Socialism, Communism, theories of political economy, utilitarianism, liberty and equality, all the moral opinions of men, all that governs the world, and that the Church considers to be inimical to it, is a part of the very doctrine which



the same Church unwittingly brought in together with that doctrine of Christ which it tried to conceal.

The life of the world in our time follows its own course, independently of the teaching of the Church. That teaching has remained so far behind, that men of the world hearken no more to the voices of the teachers; and, indeed, there is nothing worth listening to, because the Church only gives explanations which the world has already grown tired of—explanations of an organization which is rapidly decaying.

Certain men set out in a boat, while a man at the helm steered. He was a skilful pilot, and the boat glided rapidly on; but a time came when a less skilful helmsman took his place. Finding the latter incapable of steering well, those in the boat first ridiculed him and then drove him away.

That would not have mattered much, if the men had not forgotten, in their anger against the useless helmsman, that without one they would not know in what direction they were going. So it was with our Christian world. The Church does not stand at the helm any more; we row rapidly on, and all the progress of knowledge on which our nineteenth century prides itself, is only the result of our floating without a helmsman. We do not know whither we are going. We go on leading our present lives absolutely without knowing why we do so. And yet it is as unreasonable to live without knowing why we do so, as it is to set off in a boat without knowing whither we are bound.

If men did nothing themselves, but were placed in the position they occupy by some outward power,



then they might answer the question, 'why are you in such a position?' by saying that they did not know why. But men make their own positions for themselves, for each other, and especially for their children, and they must therefore be able to answer when asked *why* they assemble into armies, to cripple and to kill each other; *why* they waste the immense strength of millions in erecting useless and pernicious cities; *why* they organize their petty courts of law, and send men, whom they call criminals out of France to Cayenne, out of Russia to Siberia, out of England to Australia, while knowing that it is senseless to act thus. When they are asked *why* they leave the fields and woods they love, to work in factories and manufactories which they hate; *why* they bring up their children to lead the same lives though they disapprove of them; they ought to be able to give some reason for their conduct. Even were all this pleasant, men should be able to give their reasons; but when it is the hardest possible work, when men groan over it, how can they go on acting in this way without trying to find adequate reasons. Men never have lived without trying to solve these questions, men cannot live without making the attempt.

The Jew lived as he lived—he made war, he executed men, he built temples, he organized his life thus and not otherwise because it was enjoined him by the law which, according to his conviction, came from God Himself. It is thus likewise with the Hindoos and the Chinese, it was thus with the Romans and with the Mahometans, it was thus with

the Christians a hundred years ago, and it is thus now with the ignorant crowd. The unthoughtful Christian now solves these questions in this way: soldiery, war, courts of law, executions exist according to the commandments of God, transmitted to us by the Church. The world, as we know it, is a *lost* world. All the evil which fills it exists only by the will of God as a punishment for the sins of men, and therefore we must submit to it. We can only save our souls by faith, by the sacraments, by prayer, and by submission to the will of God. The Church teaches us that each must submit to the Sovereign, who is the anointed of God, and to those who are in authority over us; that each must defend his own property by violence, make war, execute or be executed, according to the will of the authorities, placed over him by God. Be this explanation good or bad does not matter, it formerly explained all the various phases of life to the believing Christian, and man did not renounce his own reason while living according to the law which he acknowledged as divine. But now the time has come when only the most ignorant believe in this, and even their number decreases with every day and every hour of the day. There is no possibility of stopping this progression. All eagerly follow those who are in front, and all will soon reach the point where the foremost now stand. But the foremost are standing upon the brink of an abyss. The position of the foremost is an awful one. They point out the path to those who are to follow them, and are themselves completely ignorant both of what they are doing and of the things that impel them to act as

they do. There is not one man amongst them who could now answer the direct question, 'Why ledest thou the life which thou ledest?' 'Why dost thou do what thou doest?' I have addressed such questions to hundreds of men, and have never received a direct reply. Instead of a plain answer to the question, I always received an answer to some question which I had not asked. Whenever I asked a Catholic, Protestant, or orthodox believer why he lived as he did—so contrary to the doctrine of Christ, which he professed—instead of a direct answer, each would begin to talk of the lamentable want of faith of the present generation, of the wicked men who propagate irreligion, and of what awaited the Church in future. But the answer why the man did not do what his creed enjoined, was never given me. Instead of answering about himself he would speak of the general state of mankind, and of the Church, as if his own life was of no importance whatever, and as if he were engrossed by the idea of saving all mankind, and especially the institution called 'the Church.'

A philosopher, whether an idealist, a spiritualist, a pessimist, or a positivist, would answer the question, 'Why he did not live according to his philosophical teaching?' by talking of the progress of mankind, of the historical law of that progress, thanks to which mankind was rapidly advancing towards perfect happiness. But he would never give a direct answer to the question, 'Why he himself, in his own life, did not fulfil what he considered rational?' The philosopher, like the believer, seems to be taken

up with observing the general laws of all humanity, rather than with the ordering of his own individual life.

If you ask an average man, a representative of the great majority of the civilized men who are half believers, half unbelievers, and who are all, without a single exception, dissatisfied with their own lives and with our social adjustments, and who always foresee approaching ruin,—such an average man, on being asked why he leads a life which he himself blames, and why he does nothing to improve it, never gives you a direct answer, never speaks of himself, but turns the conversation to some general question about justice, trade, the state, or civilization. If he be a policeman or an attorney he will say, ‘And how are things to go on if in order to better my own life I take no part in the affairs of the country?—how will trade progress?’ If he be a merchant he will say, ‘What progress will civilization make, if I do not co-operate in its advancement?’ Each speaks as if the problem of his life did not lie in attaining the happiness towards which he strives, but in serving the state, commerce, or civilization. The average man answers exactly as the believer and philosopher do. He answers a personal question by a general one; and the reason why the believer, the philosopher, and the average man retort by a general question is that not one of them has any true notion of life. And each of them really feels ashamed of his ignorance.

It is only in our Christian world that, instead of the doctrine of life, the explanation of what our life ought to be—which is religion—there is only the

explanation why life must be such as it was of old ; and the name of religion is given to a teaching which nobody needs. Nor is that all ; science has acknowledged this same fortuitous, defective position of society as the law of all mankind. Learned men, such as Tillet, Spenser, and others, argue very seriously about 'religion,' understanding by the word the metaphysical teaching of the 'origin of all,' without suspecting that, instead of speaking of religion as a whole, they speak but of a part of it.

The result of all this is that, in our century, we see wise and learned men, who are 'naïvely' convinced that they are devoid of all religion, only because they do not acknowledge the correctness of those metaphysical explanations which were, in some past time, given as explanations of life. The idea never occurs to them that they *must* live in some way or other, that they *do* live in some way or other, and that it is exactly the principle on which their lives are based which is their religion. These men imagine that they have very elevated convictions and no faith. But, whatever they may say, they have faith if they accomplish any rational work, because rational work is always the result of faith.

We may live according to the teaching of the world ; we may lead an animal life without acknowledging anything higher and more obligatory than the decrees of the existing authorities. But he that lives thus cannot be said to live rationally. Before saying that we live rationally we must answer the question, 'Which doctrine of life we consider as a rational one?' Miserable beings that we are, we have no such doctrine ; we



have even lost all consciousness of the necessity for gaining any rational doctrine of life.

Ask the men of our day, be they believers or unbelievers, what doctrine they follow. They will be obliged to confess that they follow only the laws written by the officials of the Second Section, or by the Legislative Assembly, and put in practice by the police. This is the only teaching that our European world acknowledges. They know that this teaching does not come either from heaven or from the prophets, neither was it taught by the sages. They blame the regulations of these officials and of the legislative assemblies, but submit to its executors, who are the police, and obey without a murmur the most barbarous exactions. The legislative assemblies have decreed, and officials have written, that each young man must be ready to submit to insult, death, and murder; and all the fathers and mothers who have grown-up sons obey that law.

But all notions of there being a law which is indubitably rational, and which each feels in his inmost soul to be obligatory, is so lost in our world, that the existence of a law amongst the Hebrews, which defined the whole order of life, *for them*, a law which was rendered obligatory by the moral feeling of each, is considered as existing exclusively amongst the Hebrews. It is regarded as a peculiarity of the Hebrew nation that they obeyed what they considered in their inmost souls to be the indubitable truth, received directly from God, and they knew it to be such because it was in unison with their conscience. The position of an educated man, a Christian, is con-



sidered to be a normal and natural one, when he obeys what he knows was only written by despised men, and is put in execution by policemen, that is, when he obeys what he feels to be unjust and contrary to his conscience.

It was in vain that I looked in our civilized world for some moral principles of life which should be clearly expressed. There are none. There is even no consciousness of such principles being necessary. There is even a firm conviction that moral principles are unnecessary; and that religion only consists in words about a future life, about God, about certain rites which, as some say, are necessary for salvation, while others consider them as totally unnecessary, and say that life goes on independently of all rules,—that all that is needful is, to obey passively.

The main points of faith are—the doctrine of life, and the explanation of what life is and ought to be. Of these the first is considered as unimportant, and as having nothing to do with faith; while the second is but an explanation of a life that *was*, in some past time, together with some conjectures about the historical progress of life; and this is considered as the most important and serious point. In all that really enters into the life of man—for instance, how he is to live? is he to commit murder or not?—is he to condemn his fellow-creatures or not?—in what way he is to bring up his children?—men submit without a murmur to the rule of others, who know no more than they do themselves why *they* themselves live as they do, and why they insist upon others living in the same way.

And men consider such a life as rational, and are not ashamed of it. This state of things would be awful, were it universal. Fortunately, there are men in our days, the best men of our time, who, dissatisfied with such a creed, have a creed of their own concerning the life which we ought to lead.

These men are considered as pernicious and dangerous unbelievers; and yet they are the only believers,—they are believers in the doctrine of Christ, or at least in a part of it.

These men often do not know the whole doctrine of Christ,—they do not properly understand it, and indeed they often reject the chief basis of the Christian faith, which is *non-resistance of evil*; but their faith in what life ought to be, is derived from the doctrine of Christ. However these men may be persecuted, slandered, they are the only men who do not passively submit to all that is ordered them, and therefore they are the only men who do not vegetate, but lead a rational life, and they are the only true believers.

The link between the world and the Church grew weaker and weaker, according as its teaching flowed more and more into the world.

And now the last link, which bound us to the Church, is breaking, and an independent process of life is beginning.

The teaching of the Church, with its dogmas, councils, hierarchy, is unquestionably bound up with the doctrine of Christ.

Our European world, outwardly so self-confident,

bold and decided, and yet in the depth of its consciousness so terrified and confused, is undergoing what a new-born babe does; it tosses about, turning from side to side, crying, and not knowing what it is to do. It feels that the source of its former nourishment has dried up, but does not yet know where to look for a new one.

It is thus with our European world. See what a complicated, seemingly rational, energetic life there is in our European world. Art, science, trade, social activity—all are full of life. But all this only lives because it has been recently fed by its mother. The Church brought the rational doctrine of Christ into the world. It has done its business, and now has withered away. All the organs of the world are full of life, but the source of their former nourishment is stopped, and they have not found a new one. They seek it everywhere.

The world has now to comprehend that the former unconscious process of nourishment has outlived its time, and that a new, conscious process of nourishment is needful.

This new process consists in admitting those truths of the Christian doctrine which had formerly flowed into the world through the medium of the Church, and which are the sources of life. Men must again lift up the light which was hidden from them, and they must place it high before themselves and others, and consciously live in that light.

The doctrine of Christ as a religion which defines life, and gives an explanation of human life, stands now as it did 1800 years ago before the world. But

before, the world had the interpretations of the Church, which, while hiding the doctrine from their eyes, seemed to suffice for its life ; but now the time has come, when the Church has served its time and the world has no one to explain to it the problem of its new life, and feeling its helplessness, must accept the doctrine of Christ.

Christ teaches us, first of all, to believe in the light while the light is in us. Christ teaches men to place this light of reason above all else, to live up to it, not to do what they themselves acknowledge to be irrational. If you consider it irrational to kill Turks or Germans, do not do so ; if you consider it irrational to force poor creatures to work hard, in order that you may wear fine hats or have fine drawing-rooms, do not do so ; if you find it an irrational proceeding to shut up those who have been depraved by idleness in a prison, in this way to condemn them to the worst possible company and to complete idleness, then do not do so ; if you think it irrational to live in an infected town, when you can live in the fresh fields, if you consider it irrational to make your children study the dead languages more than they do anything else, then do not do so.

The doctrine of Christ is 'light.' The light shines. It is impossible not to accept the light when it shines. It is impossible to struggle against it ; it is impossible to refuse to accept it. It is impossible to refuse the doctrine of Christ, because it encompasses all the errors in which men live, and, like the ether, which those who study the philosophy of nature speak of, it penetrates all. The doctrine of Christ is essential

for each, whatever position he may be in. Christ's doctrine must be accepted by men, not because it is impossible to deny the metaphysical explanation of life which it gives (we may deny all we choose), but because it alone gives us rules of life, without which mankind cannot live, if, at least, they wish to live as rational beings.

The power of Christ's doctrine does not lie in the explanations it gives of the sense of life, but in the doctrine of life which flows out of it. The metaphysical teaching of Christ is not new: it is a teaching which is written in the hearts of men, and which was preached by all the truly wise men of the world. But the power of Christ's doctrine lies in the practical application of this metaphysical teaching to life.

The metaphysical foundation of the teaching of the ancient Hebrews and of that of Christ is the same—'love to God and to our neighbour.' But the application of this doctrine to life, according to Moses and according to the law of Christ, is very different. According to the law of Moses it was necessary to fulfil 613 commandments, including some most senseless and cruel ones, all based upon the authority of the Scriptures. According to the law of Christ the teaching which flows out of the same metaphysical basis is expressed in five rational commandments, which carry their own meaning and their own justification along with them, and which embrace the life of all mankind.

The doctrine of Christ would not be rejected either by Jews, Buddhists, Mahometans, or others, even if they doubted the truth of their own creed; still less

can it be rejected by our Christian world, which has no other moral law.

The doctrine of Christ does not disagree with men in respect to their view of life, but, including it, gives them what is wanting in it, what is indispensable. It points out to them a path which is not a new one, but one familiar to them from their childhood.

You are a believer, whatever creed you may profess. You believe in the creation of the world, in the Trinity, in the fall and the redemption of man, in the sacraments, in the efficacy of prayer, in the Church. Christ's doctrine does not tell you that your creed is wrong; it only gives what is wanting. While you keep to your present creed, you feel that the life of the world and your own life are full of evil, and you see no way of escape from this evil. The doctrine of Christ (obligatory to you, being the teaching of your God), gives you simple rules, which will deliver you and others from that evil. Believe in resurrection from the dead, believe in Paradise, in hell, in the Pope, in the Church, pray as your creed enjoins you to do, keep the fasts, sing psalms, and all this does not prevent you from fulfilling what Christ tells you to do in order to attain true happiness, namely, *avoid anger, do not commit adultery, do not swear, do not defend yourself by violence, never make war.*

It may, perhaps, happen that you will not always fulfil all this, you will yield to temptation and transgress one of these laws, as you violate the rules of the civil law or the laws of good-breeding. You will, perhaps, in a moment of impulse, swerve from the rules laid down by Christ. But in your calmer



moments do not act as you do now, do not organize your life in a way that renders it difficult to avoid anger and adultery, to abstain from swearing and using violence or making war; but organize it in a way that should make all these things difficult to do. You must admit the duty of acting thus, for these are the commandments of God.

You are, perhaps, an unbeliever, a philosopher. You say that all goes on in the world according to a law which you have discovered. The doctrines of Christ fully acknowledges the law which you have discovered. But, independently of this law, according to which the good which it is to bring mankind will be attained by them after thousands of years, is your own individual life. Now you have no rules at all for your own individual life, except those written by men whom you despise, and put in execution by the police. The doctrine of Christ gives you *rules* which decidedly agree with your law, for your law of altruism is nothing but a bad periphrasis for the doctrine of Christ.

Or you are neither a believer nor an unbeliever, you have no time to seek the purport of life, and you have no definite creed; it is enough for you that you act as all others do. Then Christ's doctrine says in effect to you, you are unable to verify the truth of the doctrine that is preached to you—you find it easier to follow the example of those around you; but, however humble you may be in mind, you have a judge in your hearts who sometimes makes you feel that you have acted rightly, at other times shows you that you are wrong. However modest your lot may be, you cannot help sometimes asking yourself, 'Ought I

to act as all around me do, or according to my own feeling?' And no sooner does the question arise in your mind than the precepts of Christ are found to answer both your reason and your conscience. If you be more a believer than an unbeliever, you act according to the will of God by following the precepts of Christ; if you be more of a free-thinker than a believer, by obeying Christ's precepts you follow the most rational laws that ever existed in the world, as you will see yourself, because the precepts of Christ bear their own justification in themselves.

Christ says (John xii. 31.), 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.'

He says likewise (John xvi. 33), 'These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

And it is in this way that the world, or the evil that is in the world, is overcome.

If a world of evil still exist, it exists but as something that is dead: it lives only by inertion; there is no force of life in it. It does not exist for him that believes in the commandments of Christ. It is conquered by the rational consciousness of the son of man.

'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. The victory that overcometh the world is your faith' (1 John, v. 4.)

The faith which overcometh the world is faith in the teaching of Christ.

## XII.

I BELIEVE in the doctrine of Christ, and the articles of my belief are as follows.

I believe that true happiness will only be possible when all men begin to follow Christ's doctrine.

I believe that the fulfilment of this doctrine is easy, possible, and conducive to happiness.

I believe that, even if it be left unfulfilled by all around me, if I have to stand alone amongst men, I cannot do otherwise than follow it in order to save my own life from inevitable destruction.

I believe that, while I followed the teaching of the world, my life was a life of suffering, and that it is only by living according to the doctrine of Christ that I can attain the happiness which the Father of life destined me to enjoy in this world.

'The law is given through Moses; but happiness and truth are given through Jesus Christ' (John i. 17). The doctrine of Christ is happiness and truth. When I did not know the truth I did not know true happiness. Thinking that evil was happiness, I fell into evil, and I doubted my right to long for happiness. Now, I have understood and believed that the happiness for which I long is the will of the Father, is the lawful basis of my life. Christ says to me, live for thy happiness and for that of others, but do not believe in the snares—temptations (*σκανδαλός*) which attract thee by a semblance of happiness, while they, in reality, deprive thee of it and entice thee into

evil. Thy happiness is in thy unity with all men. Deprive not thyself of the happiness given thee.

Christ hath revealed to me that love to all men is not only a duty which we must all strive after, but that in it lies true happiness—a happiness as natural to men as it is to children, as He says; and it is innate in all men, till it is destroyed by deceit, error, and temptation.

Christ has not only revealed this to me, but has enumerated in His commandments all the temptations which draw me away from the state of unity, love, and happiness natural to man, and entice me into the snares of wickedness. The commandments of Christ show me how to escape the temptations which led me away from true happiness.

Happiness was given me, and I have destroyed it. Christ's commandments reveal the snares which have destroyed my happiness, and therefore I cannot help endeavouring to avoid them. My creed is in this, and in this alone.

Christ has shown me that the first snare is enmity—anger. I believe this, and can, therefore, no longer harbour a feeling of enmity against any man. I can no longer pride myself upon my anger as I used to do, nor justify it to myself by thinking myself great and clever, and others insignificant and foolish. As soon as I remember that I am giving way to anger I can no longer refuse to acknowledge myself in the wrong, nor can I help seeking to be reconciled to those who are at enmity with me.

Nor is that all. If I know that my anger is unnatural, wicked, I likewise know the snare which led

me into it. The snare was my standing aloof from others, acknowledging only a few as my equals, and all the rest of the world as insignificant (*racas*) or foolish and ignorant (thou fool!). I see now that this habit of holding myself aloof from others and considering them as fools—(*racas*), were the chief causes of my enmity towards men. On recalling my past life to mind I now see that I never once harboured a feeling of enmity towards those whom I considered my superiors, and that I never intentionally wounded their feelings; that, on the contrary, the most trifling circumstances sufficed to excite my anger against a man whom I considered my inferior, and the more I considered myself above him the easier I found it to outrage him. But I know now that it is only he who humbles himself before others, who works for others, that stands above the rest. I understand now that what is highly esteemed by men is abomination in the sight of God, and why woe is foretold to the rich and famous, why beggars and those that are humble are the blessed. My understanding of this has changed my view of all that is good and noble, evil and base in life. All that had formerly seemed good and noble in my eyes, such things as honour, glory, education, riches, all the refinements of life, elegant furniture, good food, fine clothes, etc., have grown worthless to me. All that seemed bad and base, such things as obscurity, poverty, uncouth manners, simplicity of furniture, of food, of clothes, etc., have grown good and noble in my eyes. If, therefore, I now inadvertently give myself up to anger and wound another's feelings I dare not, after a moment's serious

reflection, yield to the temptation which deprives me of true happiness, union, and love, any more than a man can set a snare for himself, in which he was once caught. I can no longer try to rise above other men, to separate myself from them, nor can I admit either rank or title for myself or others, except the title of 'man.' I can no longer seek fame or glory, nor can I help trying to get rid of my riches which separate me from my fellow-creatures. I cannot help seeking in my way of life, in its surroundings, in my food, my clothes, my manners, to draw nearer to the majority of men, and to avoid all that separates me from them.

Christ has shown me that the second snare which destroys my happiness is 'lasciviousness,' 'sensuality.' Knowing this, I can no longer acknowledge such passions to be natural, and I cannot justify them to myself. No sooner do I feel that I am giving way to my passions than I know myself to be in an unhealthy, unnatural state of mind, and try by all possible means to escape this evil.

And, knowing the sin, I know, too, the snares which led me into it, and I can no longer yield to it. I know now that the chief cause of temptation lies in the separation of men and women from those to whom they were once united. I know now that the forsaking of those to whom men and women have been once united is the 'divorce' which Christ forbids, for it brings depravity into the world. On recalling my past life I see clearly that it was not the unnatural education I had received which had led me into lasciviousness, by both physically and morally exciting



my passions and justifying them by all the refinements of wit, but likewise my having forsaken the woman with whom I had first been united. I understood the full meaning of Christ's words, and saw that God had created man and woman in order that they might live in couples, and that what God had joined together should never be put asunder. I now see clearly that monogamy is the natural law of mankind and must never be broken. I understand the words that 'he who divorces his wife,' that is, the woman to whom he was first united, 'forces her to commit adultery,' and brings new evil into the world. My belief in this has changed my former estimate of what is noble and good, bad and base in life. The things which I had formerly prized—a refined, elegant life, the passionate and poetic love extolled by all poets and artists, has become wicked and hideous in my eyes. A hard-working, poor, simple life, which masters human passions, seems alone desirable.

It is not our human institution of marriage which makes really lawful the union of man and woman. I consider as alone sacred and obligatory that union which, once and for ever, binds a man to the first woman he loves.

I can no longer give way to idleness and an easy life, which always tends to excite inordinate desires, nor can I find pleasure in novel-reading, poetry, music, balls, which I had hitherto regarded, not only as innocent, but even as refined occupations. I cannot forsake my wife, for I now know that my doing so is a snare for myself, for her, and for others; neither can I co-operate in the separation of any

husband and wife, whether their union has been associated with church rites or not. Every union between a man and woman I consider to be sacred and binding to the end of their days.

Christ has revealed to me that the third snare which destroys my happiness is the 'taking of an oath.' I believe this, and I dare not take any oath. Nor dare I allege, for my justification, that my doing so cannot harm any one; that all do so, that the State requires it of me, and that my refusing to do so will do no good either to myself or others. I know that this is an evil for me and all men, and I cannot do it.

I know, besides, wherein the temptation lay, which enticed me into this evil, and I dare not yield to it any more. I know that the snare lies in our *sanctioning deception*. Men swear to submit to the commands of men, whereas man must submit to God alone. The most awful evil in the world, by the consequences it entails, as war, imprisonment, executions, torture, only exist through this snare, by which all responsibility is taken off those who do evil. I now understand the meaning of the words, 'All that is more than a simple affirmation or negation, yes or no, is evil;' every promise is evil. Having understood this, I now see that the taking of an oath is against my own good, as well as the good of others; and the knowledge that it is so has altered my estimate of what is good and bad, noble or base. All that has seemed most good and noble to me before, as obligatory allegiance to the government, the extortion of oaths from men, all the deeds conscience condemns, which are mostly the result of a man's having taken

an oath, seem bad and base to me now. Therefore, I can no longer set aside the commandment of Christ, which says, 'Swear not at all.' I cannot now swear myself, nor can I insist upon others doing so, nor can I encourage men to consider taking an oath as necessary or even harmless.

Christ has revealed to me that the fourth snare is 'resisting evil by violence.' I know that my doing so leads me and others into evil, and cannot therefore justify myself by saying that it is necessary for the protection of myself, of my property, and that of others. No sooner do I remember this than I cannot help abstaining from violence of every kind.

And I know, likewise, what the snare is. It is the erroneous idea that my welfare can be secured by defending myself and my property against others. I now know that the greater part of the evil men suffer from arises from this—instead of working for others, each tries to work as little as possible, and forcibly makes others work for him. And on recalling to mind all the evil done by myself and others, I see that it proceeded, for the most part, from our considering it possible to secure and better our conditions by violence. I now understand the meaning of the words, man is born, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others.' I now understand the saying, 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.' I now believe that my happiness, and that of all men, will only be attained when each labours for others, and not for himself; when none refuse to labour for him that is in need of help. My belief in this has altered my estimate of good and evil. All that I formerly prized,

such things as riches, property, honour, self-dignity, have grown worthless in my eyes; and all I formerly despised, such things as hard work, poverty, humility, the renunciation of property, of one's rights, have grown good and noble in my eyes. If I now feel tempted to defend myself or others, my own property or that of others, by violence, I can no longer give way to temptation. I dare not amass riches for myself. I dare not use violence of any kind against my fellow-creatures, except, perhaps, against a child in order to save it from present harm; nor can I now take part in any act of authority, whose purpose it is to protect men's property by violence. I can neither be judge, nor take part in judging and condemning.

Christ has revealed to me that the fifth snare is 'the distinction we make between our own and foreign nations. If, therefore, a feeling of enmity arises in my heart against a foreigner, I cannot help acknowledging, after a few moments' serious reflection, that the feeling is a wicked one; I can no longer justify this feeling to myself, by acknowledging the superiority of my own nation over others, or by the cruelty or barbarity of any other nation. I cannot help trying to be kinder, more friendly, towards a foreigner than towards my own countrymen, rather than otherwise.

And knowing that the distinction I formerly made between my own and other nations is evil, I see the snare which led me into this evil, and can no longer consciously let myself be drawn into it. It is the erroneous idea that my welfare is linked but with that of my native land, and not with that of all mankind. But I now know that my unity with other men cannot

be destroyed by frontiers, barriers, the disposal of kingdoms, or by my belonging to some particular nation. I now know that men are equal everywhere—that all are ‘brethren.’ On recalling to mind all the evil which I did myself, and which I suffered from others, in consequence of the enmity which so often exists between different nations, it is clear to me that the cause was the gross imposition called ‘patriotism.’ I can remember perfectly well that the feeling of enmity towards other nations, the assumption that a difference existed between myself and them, was not a feeling natural to me, but was grafted upon me by the senseless education given me. But I now understand the meaning of the words, ‘Love your enemies, do good to them.’ You are all the children of one Father, therefore be like the Father; that is, make no distinction between men, treat all as brethren. I now see clearly that I can only attain happiness by being in unity with all my fellow-creatures. I believe in this. And this belief has completely altered my former estimate of what is good and bad, noble or base. All that I formerly prized as something worthy of respect, love for our native land, pride in our country, our administration in military exploits, now seems not only pitiful but hideous to me. Cosmopolitanism, which I had formerly despised, now seems a noble thing to me. I can no longer take any part in quarrels between various nations, either in speech or by writing; neither can I take part in any of the various administrations based on the difference of nationality, either in custom-houses, in collecting taxes, in preparing ammunition or fire-arms, or in military service;



still less can I take part in war against other nations. And having understood what is conducive to happiness, I can no longer do what deprives me of it.

I believe that I must live thus : I believe that it is only by living thus that I can find a rational purport in life. I believe that my rational life is the light given me in order that it should shine before men, not in my words but in my good deeds, that men may glorify their Father (Matt. v. 6). I believe that my life and my knowledge of the truth is the talent given me ; that it is a fire which cannot be quenched. I believe that I am Nineveh, in relation to other Jonases, from whom I have learned the truth, but that I am also Jonas in relation to other Ninevites, to whom it is my duty to reveal the truth. I believe that the only true purport of my life is 'to live up to the light which is in me ;' not to conceal it, but to set it high before men, that all should see it ; and this belief gives me new strength to fulfil the doctrine of Christ, and destroys all the obstacles which had formerly stood in my way.

All that had undermined my belief in the truth of Christ's doctrine, and had made it seem impracticable ; all that had set me against it, as the having to endure privation, suffering, and death at the hands of those who do not know His doctrine, is just what now confirms its truth in my eyes and attracts me towards it.

Christ has said, 'When you lift up the son of man, all will be drawn up,' and I felt myself irresistibly drawn to Him. He said, likewise, 'The truth will set you free,' and I felt completely free.

Enemies will come to make war, or wicked men



will assault me, I had previously thought, and if I do not defend myself they will despoil me and all my family; they will abuse us, torture and kill me and mine; and this seemed horrible to me. But all that troubled me before has now turned to joy, and confirmed the truth. I know that my enemies, the so-called wicked men of the world, robbers, etc., are men, are the 'sons of men;' that they, like me, bear love for goodness and hatred of evil innate in them; that they live, as I do, on the eve of death, and, like me, can only be saved by fulfilling the doctrine of Christ. If the truth be unknown to them, and they do evil, my knowing the truth makes it my duty to reveal it to those who do not know it. I cannot do so otherwise than by refusing to take any part in evil, and by confessing the truth by my deeds.

You say if enemies come to attack you, either Germans, Turks, or savages, and if you do not make war they will kill you all. This is an error. If there were a society of Christians who did no evil to anybody, and who gave the surplus of their labour to others, no enemies, either Germans, Turks, or savages, would torture or kill them. They would take what these Christians (for whom there would exist no difference between Germans, Turks, or savages) would give up to them. If a Christian be called upon to take part in war, that is the moment for him to testify the truth to those who do not know it. Nor can he testify it in any other way than in deed, by refusing to go to war, and doing good to all, be they enemies or not.

But if the family of a Christian be assaulted, not

by foreign enemies, but by wicked men in his own country, if he do not defend himself, he and his family will be robbed, tortured, and killed. This is an error, again. If all the members of a family were Christians, and gave up their lives to the service of others, not one man would despoil them or kill them. Mikluha Macklař settled amongst a most brutal tribe of savages, and was not murdered by them; they learned to love him, and submitted to him, because he did not require anything of them, but did as much good to them as he could.

If a Christian has to live amidst relations and friends who are not Christians in the full sense of the word, who defend themselves and their property by violence, and call upon him to take part in their violence, then is the time for him to fulfil the duty for which life is given him. The knowledge of the truth is only given to a Christian in order that he should make it known to others, and especially to those he is more closely connected with, and to whom he is bound by ties of relationship or friendship; and the Christian can testify to the truth in no other way than by avoiding the errors into which others have fallen, and refusing to take part either in the violence of the aggressors or of those who resist them, by giving all up to others, and by showing that his only desire is to fulfil the will of God, and that he fears nothing as much as acting against it.

But the country cannot allow a member to evade fulfilling the duties incumbent on every citizen. The administration of the country requires each man to take his oath of allegiance, to take part in judging

and condemning ; each man is obliged to enter the military service, and if he refuse he will be exposed to punishment, transportation, imprisonment, and even death. And here again is the Christian called upon to fulfil his duty towards God. The Christian knows that all these things are required of him by men who do not know the truth, and therefore he who does know it must testify it to those who do not. The violence, imprisonment, perhaps even death, to which the Christian will then be exposed in consequence of his refusal, will enable him to testify to the truth not in words, but in deeds. Every act of violence, pillage, executions, war, are the results, not of the irrational force of nature, but of man's ignorance of the truth. And therefore the greater the evil these men do, the further they are from the truth, the more desperate is their state, and the more needful it is that they should be taught the truth. And a Christian can only transmit the knowledge of the truth to others by keeping away from the error they are in, and by returning good for evil. The whole duty of a Christian, the whole purport of his life, which cannot be destroyed by death, lies in this.

Men linked together by deception form, we might say, a compact body. In the compactness of this body lies all the evil of the world.

Revolutions are but efforts to break this compact body by violence ; but its component parts will last until an inward power be communicated to them which shall force them asunder.

The chain which fetters them is 'falsehood,' 'deception.' The power which sets each link of this

human chain free is 'truth.' The truth is transmitted to men by *deeds*.

Deeds, which bring the light to each man's heart, can alone destroy the chain, and remove one man after another out of the compact mass fettered by falsehood.

And this has gone on for eighteen hundred years.

The work began when the commandments of Christ were first placed before the world, and it will not end till all be fulfilled, as Christ says (Matt. v. 18).

The Church, whose members tried to unite men by persuading them that it was necessary for salvation blindly to believe that the truth was in her, is no more. But the Church whose followers are not united by promises of reward, but by good deeds, *lives, and will live for ever*. That Church does not consist of men who cry 'Lord, Lord,' and live in sin, but of men who hear His words and follow His commandments.

Those who belong to that Church know that their lives will be blessed, if they do not break the unity of the 'Son of man,' and that their happiness can only be destroyed by their leaving the commandments of Christ unfulfilled. And therefore they follow them, and teach others to do the same.

Be these men few in number or many, they are that *Church* which shall not be overcome, and which all men will join, sooner or later.

'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

THE END.

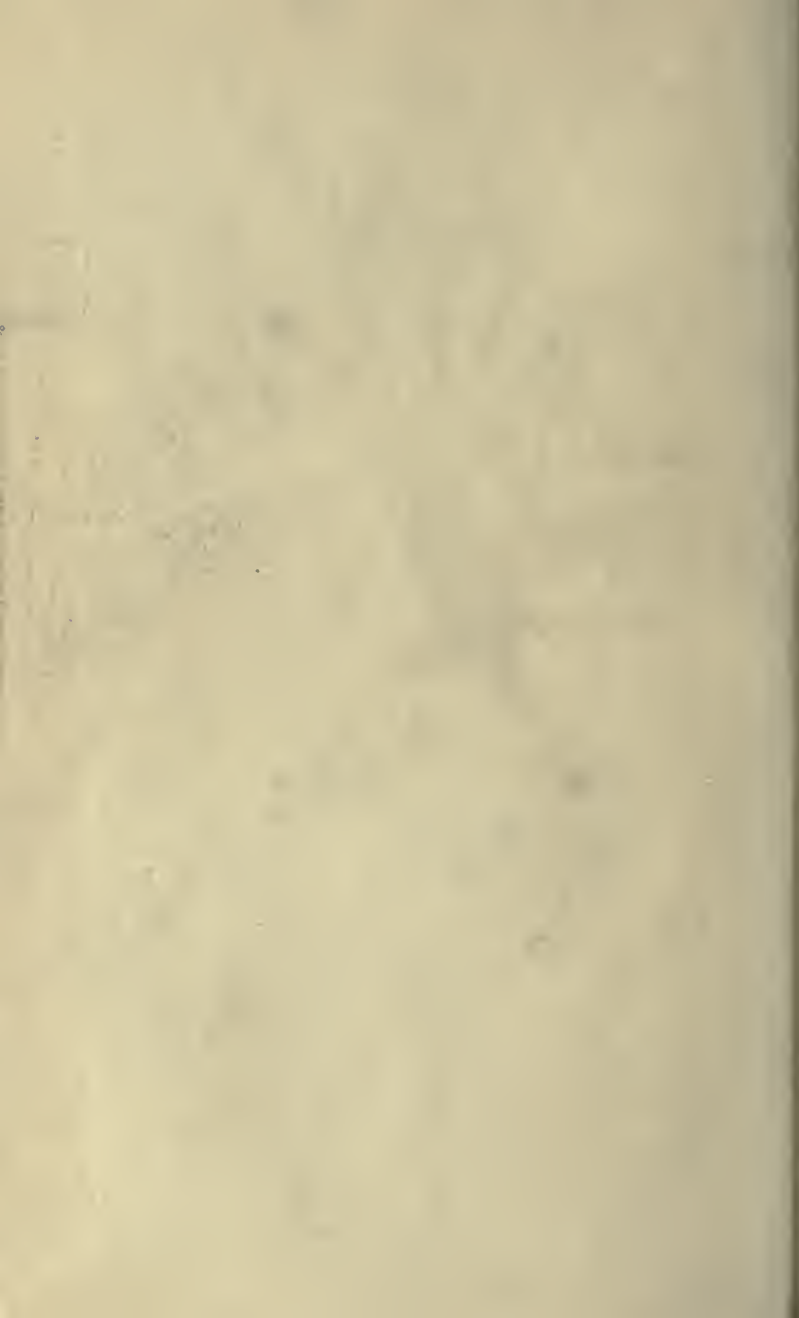
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